



Center
on Rural
Innovation



Downtown Rutland Innovation District Placemaking Plan





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Center on Rural Innovation
www.ruralinnovation.us

Prepared for the
City of Rutland, Vermont
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A word from the mayor

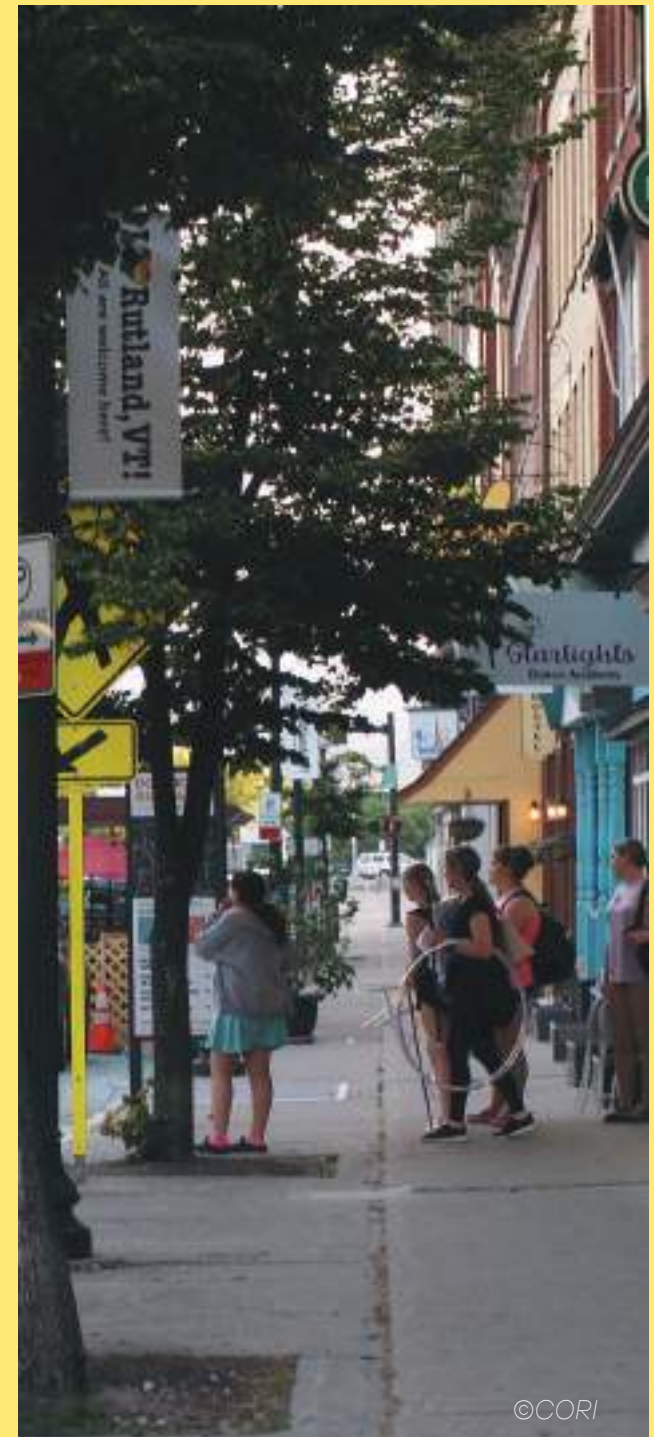
Rutland holds a special place in my heart, and seeing the potential for positive innovative change in our community is something I take great pride in. Our city is brimming with untapped possibilities, and the thoughtful strategies outlined in this placemaking plan have the power to unlock them. From revitalizing public spaces to nurturing local talent and entrepreneurship, every aspect of this initiative resonates deeply with the needs of our city.



What truly excites me about this plan is the emphasis on making informed decisions backed by solid data. By leveraging the insights gained from extensive research, community consultations, and workshops, we have the opportunity to make wise choices that will shape Rutland's future for the better. This isn't just about aesthetics; it's about creating spaces that reflect the unique character and aspirations of our community while ensuring sustainability and inclusivity.

As we move forward, I'm eager to see the transformative impact of these placemaking efforts unfold. It's about more than just beautifying our surroundings; it's about fostering a sense of belonging and pride among Rutland residents. The collaborative spirit driving this initiative, from the involvement of various stakeholders to the support from organizations like the Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR), speaks volumes about our shared commitment to Rutland's success. Sincerely,

Mike Doenges
Rutland City Mayor



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Executive summary

The Center on Rural Innovation (CORI) is pleased to present the Innovation District Placemaking Plan to the City of Rutland Vermont. The Innovation District Placemaking Plan (the Plan) is a blueprint for practical and deliverable placemaking action.

The goal of the Plan is to identify and communicate a vision, objectives, and actions for a five-year placemaking program to a wide audience who may partner, implement, fund, and enjoy all that the “innovation district” of Rutland has to offer.

This includes city officials, downtown building owners, nonprofit leaders, downtown employees, community members, and anyone else who shares the vision that downtown Rutland should be a place of possibility and innovation for everyone.

The objectives cover a diverse range of topics, from public space to signage to design to housing to services to The Hub CoWorks itself.

The actions include ones that anyone can take as well as ones that are best considered by specific organizations or

officials.

The Plan builds upon the placemaking, downtown redevelopment, and entrepreneurship-focused work to date led by the Board of Aldermen, local nonprofits, and many individuals. Their collective effort has positioned Rutland for future success.

About this plan

The Rutland Innovation District Placemaking Plan is the culmination of extensive research, on-site place assessments, community consultation, a survey, and two placemaking workshops conducted in Rutland in 2023.

The Plan, city-wide priorities, and placemaking actions identified within are informed by a shared vision and five objectives vetted by a group of community stakeholders.

The funding for the development of this plan came from the USDA, through their 2022 Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge grant.

This opportunity for Rutland was made possible thanks to the support of the Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR).

Methodology overview

The project methodology was based on proven community development approaches, combining collaborative processes with placemaking mentoring, prototyping, and evaluation.

Community engagement was undertaken between June 2023 and August 2024 to generate awareness of placemaking opportunities in Rutland and build local leadership for, and ownership of initial projects.

Surveys and interviews support the development of the shared vision for Rutland and determine feasible placemaking actions that foster an inclusive innovation district.



A common area in the Hub CoWorks ©CORI

Rural challenges

When the 2008 recession occurred, many jobs were lost. By 2013, jobs in metropolitan areas had recovered and have continued to grow. Rural job numbers still haven't recovered, with Rutland having 2% fewer jobs than it did in 2010. Automation has played a key role in this loss, with many well-paying manufacturing jobs being eliminated.

Metro and rural areas experienced significant job losses in the manufacturing sector over the past 20 years, but rural communities, unlike metro areas, have not offset these losses through job growth in the professional and business services sectors, including tech.

Why do tech jobs matter?

Rural America has 12% of the workforce, but only 5% of tech jobs, many of which bring in salaries of \$78,000 or more per year. For Rutland county, only 1.5% of workers are employed in tech, compared to 4% of their urban counterparts. In a place where the average income is closer to \$30,000¹, a deficit of high-paying jobs impacts the entire local economy. Studies have found that each high-tech job leads to the creation of 3 to 5 additional local jobs.

For every tech role at a company, there is often a non-tech role in sales, operations, design, etc. These jobs expand the demand locally for retail, restaurants, healthcare,

and other roles. Together, these diverse jobs help a rural community to thrive. However, attracting or retaining tech workers is a lot easier in rural places that have a strong sense of community and a high quality of life.

What is placemaking?

In short, placemaking is **“people-powered public space design.”**

In other words: it's a method of community planning that empowers local people to participate in the creation of physical spaces that better meet their needs. This collaborative process involves a range of stakeholders, place users, and place managers in the design, planning, development, and creation of public and public-facing places.

Through the process of placemaking, participants are delegated power to shape their community, and in doing so, they develop a shared responsibility for their local places as well as a deeper connection to the community that surrounds them.

The community-building that comes about from participating in placemaking activities creates a positive feedback loop: Most people are drawn to places that other people are enjoying, and when new people interact in

a space with others, community bonds are forged.

Thus, the simple act of people being together in space for even the smallest of projects has a ripple effect on those people, along with anyone who sees them or hears about the project.

Projects implemented without community involvement are likely to miss out on this peer-to-peer buzz.

Why rural placemaking?

Placemaking is typically associated with efforts to improve urban communities' walkability, safety, and access to services. However, placemaking benefits rural communities too. Aside from job opportunities, many people who leave their rural towns cite a lack of “things to do” as a reason to go elsewhere.

Having a variety of activities to participate in, especially ones that were created with community needs in mind, can improve a rural place's ability to draw in or keep community members.

Additionally, participating in placemaking builds leadership skills and project management capacity within a community — something that many rural places, where one person might wear several civic and volunteer hats, are often in need of.

Placemaking and innovation districts in rural towns



“The new innovation districts will be more like the market districts of a hundred years ago than the financial districts of fifty years ago.” -Ramon Marrades, Chief Strategy Officer at La Marina de València in Barcelona, Spain

This is good news for many rural downtowns. Featuring blocks of mixed-use multi-story buildings, a relatively high density, and a lower cost of living than their metropolitan counterparts, many “micropolitan” cities, including the City of Rutland, have the bones of a good market district in place of a spiritless financial district or the neighborhood-cleaving interstate that often served it.

Furthermore, with the rise of remote work, a trend reversal has begun to take place: some young people are moving back to their hometowns, while newcomers or second-home-owners have made a permanent shift to the slower pace of life found in the countryside.

Innovation districts have the potential to spur economic development that is resilient and inclusive. With a renewed interest in rural places,

it’s a great time to foster the conditions that make one possible.

A successful innovation district has lively public places and low barriers to entry. They often feature open-ended spaces that respond to the needs of people as producers and innovators, not just consumers.

In these places of possibility, “weak ties” between strangers can be formed and “strong ties” between collaborators can be strengthened, highlighting a complex social web where commercial and social exchanges blend together. To support “strong tie”-based innovation, successful districts often feature a cluster of businesses or individuals engaged in the same industry, facilitating resource and knowledge sharing. In a rural community, this likely includes people who engage in that industry as a hobby, too.

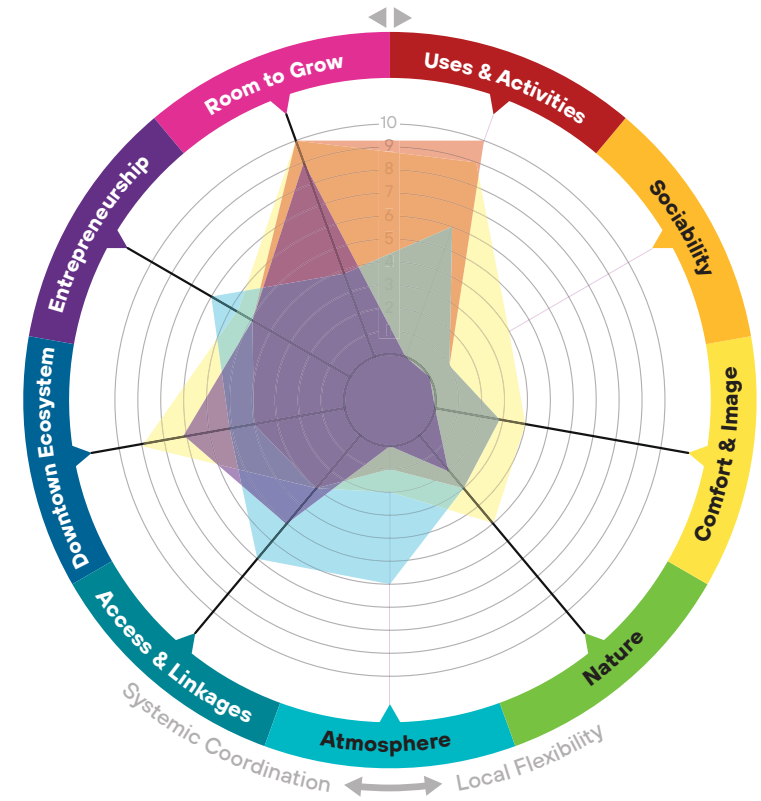
For the would-be innovator, the lower cost of living, ease of building relationships, and access to resources in a space that reinforces the idea that “anything is possible” make a rural innovation district an ideal place to grow.

Innovation district project stakeholders

To inform the development of this placemaking plan, a number of stakeholders across Rutland were engaged. They completed worksheets, participated in workshops, tested "Lighter Quicker Cheaper" (LQC) placemaking actions, and reviewed this plan.

Stakeholders

Lyle Jepson · Barbara Spaulding · Mike Doenges · Edward Clark · Michael Talbott · Tiffany Saltis · Sarah Waring · Brian Budrow · Haley Rice · Dylan Beebe · Heidi Lynch · Jeff DeJarnette · Kim Peters · Michael Woods · Monika Ganguly-Kiefner · Rick Gile · Christian Rudy · Steve Costello · Yessenia E. Acha · Morgan Over · Kim Griffin · Mark Foley · Paul Gallo · Anna Tadio · John Woodward · Bobbi Jo Stellato · Eric Mallette · Danielle Monroe · Arwen Turner · Jacob Lind · La'keiah Batista Sanchez · Sarah Ginolfi · Sarah Nadler · Ed Bove



Each color represents a sheet filled out by a different group.

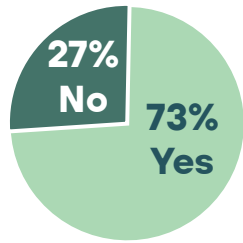
Innovation District place assessment

The diagram above represents how stakeholders perceive the opportunities in multiple spaces in downtown Rutland.

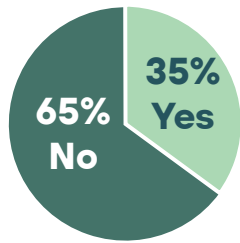
It illustrates that most opportunities for effective placemaking in these spaces are more localized and accessible. Many of the bigger systematic coordinations that can support these efforts are already in place.

Community input

Feedback on the ideas in this plan were solicited from the general public at August 2023's Friday Night Live and through an online survey.

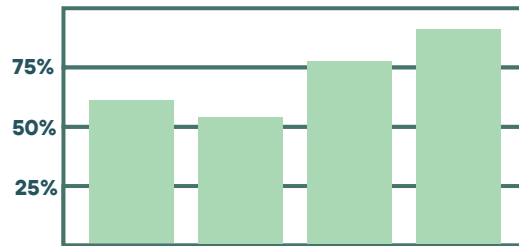


Do you feel that people in Rutland generally trust and feel warmly towards each other?



Do you feel like the publicly accessible spaces reflect feelings of trust and warmth?

I'd be there a lot more if it had...



More fun things in public space
Cleaner public spaces
More live music
More food and drink



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"Overall it feels like our town is trying to prevent things already happening and that have happened for years rather than explore possibilities."

"It's tough seeing people with more privilege be cruel and dehumanize people struggling with mental health issues."

"It's great when Center St is closed for traffic and all the restaurants and shops are offering outdoor seating."

"The outdoor spaces feel intentional and inviting. It would be awesome to mimic that with indoor settings, for the colder months."

"Cars. Terrible pedestrian crossing light intervals."

"I like the mixture of businesses and restaurants. Vibrancy. Residential units mixed in."

"I don't like the drugs that are very open and people not being open to change."

"At night it is not well lit downtown. We need more lighting, or lights that are higher output."

"The human scale to the built environment downtown makes it a place I like to be."



©iStock



The Innovation District area



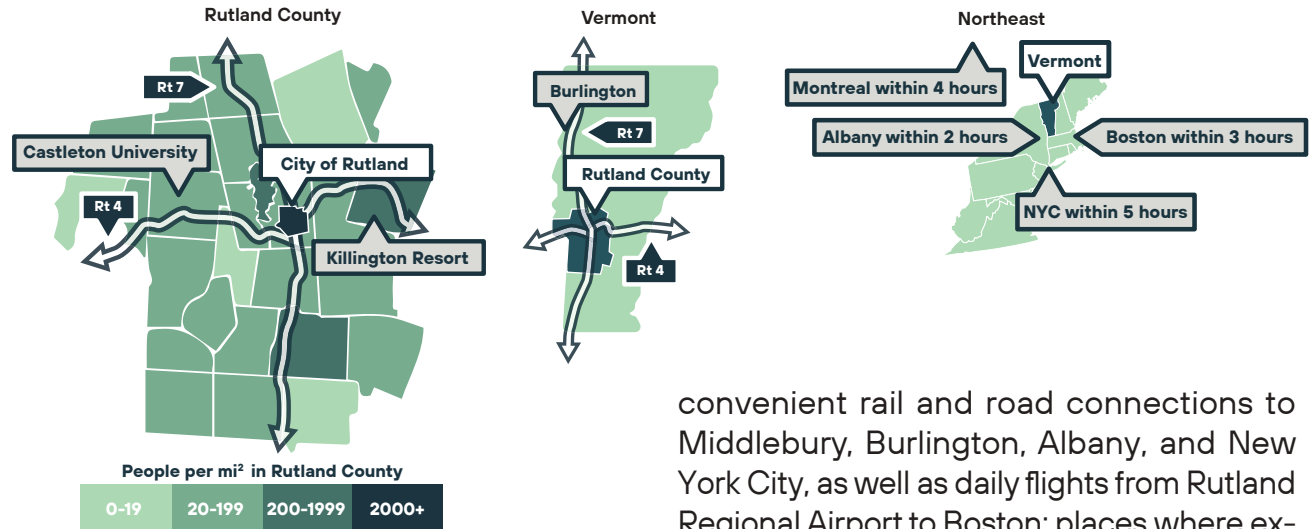
- = Innovation District
- = Downtown

Market conditions and transportation methods are often primary drivers for how space is arranged and how people use it for business purposes. As a place chartered in the 1700s, the heart of innovation in Rutland has leapt around as the transportation of goods shifted from wagons to trains to trolleys to trucks to WiFi.

The Innovation District overlaps with the "Downtown Business District," and these terms will be used interchangeably. It is shown in dark green, and is where much of the region converges for work.

Its core is The Hub CoWorks and the nearby multistory mixed-use buildings along Merchants Row and Center Street.

Rutland in context



The City of Rutland was once the most populous city in Vermont, due to its status as Vermont’s railroad hub and the plethora of available work at its marble quarries. Despite the decline in both industries, their legacy is still apparent today in the continued concentration of people, goods, and services.

Even with the majority of the city’s land being split off into three additional townships in the late 1800s, Rutland City remains the gravitational center of Rutland County.

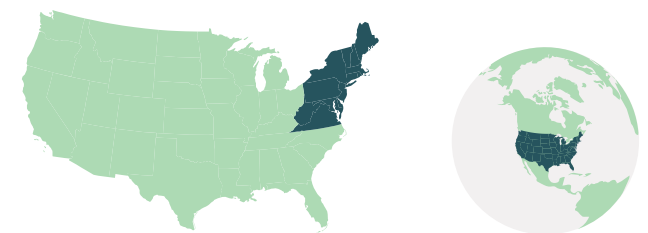
Many people who live, learn, or visit surrounding townships, including institutions such as Killington Resort and Vermont State University- Castleton, work or shop in Rutland City, enabled by Routes 7 and 4.

Within the context of the Northeast, it has

convenient rail and road connections to Middlebury, Burlington, Albany, and New York City, as well as daily flights from Rutland Regional Airport to Boston: places where expenses might be outweighing opportunities in the work-from-anywhere age.

While they may remain as traditional centers of capital, innovators in Rutland looking to make a personal connection to fund their venture won’t have to go far from home.

Once an innovation center for marble, with rail connecting it to points all over the country, the Rutland City of the internet age has the opportunity to innovate in almost anything, being connected to points all over the world.



The Vision: Bringing external realities into harmony with internal values

A brief overview of conditions

Rutland City checks many of the boxes when it comes to developing a rural innovation district.

Wifi connections are strong and reliable. A higher educational institution is only 20 minutes away. Several large regional employers are located in or near the city. Downtown hosts The Hub CoWorks and StartUp Rutland Business Incubator.

On the blocks surrounding the business incubator space are many diverse restaurants and bars, boutiques and big box stores.

There's also a lot going on socially in Rutland. It has numerous nonprofit organizations and a wide variety of recreational and leisure activities. The community is so kind-hearted that it even set the Guinness World Record for the most blood donated in a single day in the US in their 2013 Gift of Life Marathon.

It's clear that Rutland has internal values that make it a great place — so what could get in the way of it being a hotbed of innovation in the northeast? What keeps its streets from being lively spaces outside of big events. Why are business owners regularly questioned about street safety?

Rutland has a variety of challenges related to high housing prices, drug use, lack of available childcare, and a large number of

unhoused individuals².

However, addressing these serious issues wouldn't by itself further the development of an innovation district if it doesn't also address an often neglected aspect of development: the spaces in between.

External realities

Stakeholders and residents added dots to a map to represent places they felt welcome and unwelcome. Most green dots were placed in private businesses, while most red dots were placed in outdoor public space or

public-facing private space.

In an otherwise friendly, welcoming place full of possibilities, many of these spaces that exist between private businesses, workspaces, and homes send a very different signal: don't get comfortable.

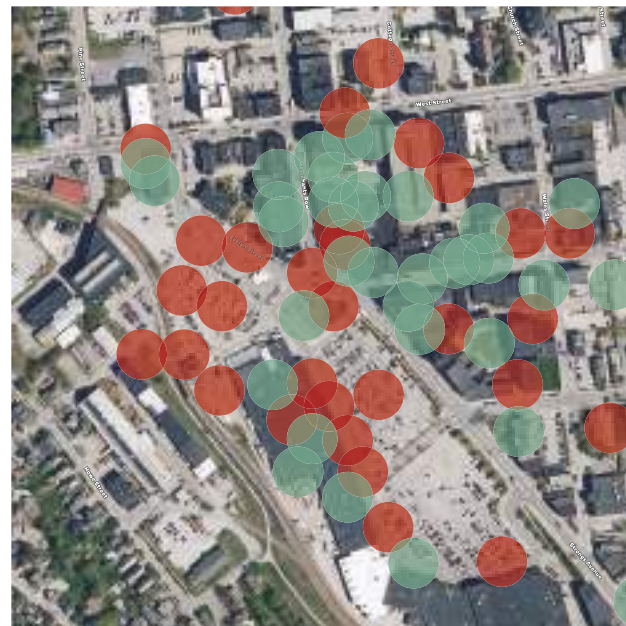
Now, there are reasonable explanations as to why each space has signs, gates, or lacks certain amenities. However, it is important that decision makers and people who dream for Rutland are aware of the shared visual landscape, and how it affects anything from general behavior to a culture of innovation.

Bringing internal values out

For the City of Rutland to reach its full potential as an inclusive and innovative place, the connective tissue between places should be just as welcoming as the places and people who already make Rutland special.

Innovation most often occurs when people have the happenstance opportunity to intermingle³ with diverse others. Happenstance is more likely when more places feel welcoming to them.

People go where they feel welcome, and stay where they feel valued. Rutland is already good at the latter, so this is mainly a matter of bringing external realities into harmony with internal values.



● = Places that feel welcoming

● = Places that feel unwelcoming

Room to Grow

This narrative can give you an idea of how the city of Rutland could be experienced if the vision is achieved.

It's September, 2029. Bailey, a 27 year-old tech entrepreneur, recently moved back to the City of Rutland in Vermont. She calls a former garage space home; it was split off and lovingly renovated from the property her uncle fixed up for his family a few years ago. As her job in Boston lost its luster, she'd looked at Rutland's downtown dwelling options while dreaming about turning her tech tinkering full-time. However, this quirky spot had proved to be the perfect distance from downtown's buzz to reset from big city life.

As a "geek" in high school, all Bailey could dream of was leaving this small town that, despite its many hardworking, caring people, had seemingly few options for her imagined future. Though she'd heard of the new "Hub" coworking space, she'd never been invited in.

While in college, she kept tabs on town. Success stories were coming out of Start-Up Rutland. Her cousins noted that all the "anti-teen" signs had been replaced with places to hang out and do things like skate. Every time Bailey visited her family, it seemed like a new small business had opened. So by the time StartUp Rutland's "Comeback Kid" invitational program was in its third year, she'd already decided that her napkin sketch start-up needed room to grow.

On nice days, it was just as convenient to bike from South Street into downtown as it was to drive. Weaving through the neighborhood to the path behind the Rutland Plaza in the morning light, she could see why people would make good-natured jokes about an "emerald city". A couple shiny new buildings—a mix of glass, brick, and wood with shops below and residences above—peeked out behind a grove of young trees beyond the train station. The plaza and downtown once felt worlds apart, but these new spaces extended the Rutland brand of downtown liveliness into a space that had previously just been for parking.

At Depot Park, Bailey stopped by the cafe cart for a coffee and a lemon pine cookie. She saw Nick, who was almost always there to charge his phone and grab a hot cup. Giving him a smile in exchange for his friendly wave, she walked her bike towards the colorful intersection. As a kid, Bailey was always reminded to be cautious while crossing this busy street. Despite the bustle of morning commuters, she was able to cross quickly and easily.

Veering left to Merchants Row, Bailey found a spot to park her bike at one of the colorful racks from a recent collaboration between high school students, creatives at The Mint, and local business owners. Center Street's "Slow Street" initiative had been a raging success for its adjacent businesses, so though she didn't know of any official plans, shopkeepers on this street had begun playfully adding amenities to the sidewalks and some

parking spaces that invited people to linger a little longer. Before bounding up the stairs, she makes a silly face at some toddlers peering through the large windows of the co-work/co-play space on the first floor, as parents practiced their pitches with one another for tomorrow's "Venture Idol".

In the vibrant lobby she breezed past the Hub's manager, who was scribbling on the wall-sized Business Model Canvas while a firefighter talked out ideas about a new invention. Bailey propped the door to her office open and hung up her jacket. The unofficial AM "open door policy" and the camaraderie that came with it had led to many breakthroughs as well as friendships.

As she turned on her computer, Bailey looked out her window onto the Hub's backyard where people were chatting and ambling to their offices, lingering over the water fountain and crisp fall air. *"The competition at Venture Idol is steep,"* she contemplated, *"but even if I don't place, I know it isn't my only chance for this startup to thrive here."* Rutland was a place of possibility, and there seemed to be room for anyone who put the work in.



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Objectives

In this section, you'll find five objectives that individuals, civic groups, and elected leaders can pursue in an effort to foster an inclusive innovation ecosystem in downtown Rutland. The context for each objective is explained, an overview of the solution is provided, and page numbers for the placemaking actions that contribute to that solution are listed.

In the Placemaking section, you'll find highlighted objective symbols as a quick reference for what objective the action contributes to.

Individual inclusion is key to successful placemaking

Empowering individuals and small community groups to engage in placemaking activities is key to transforming the feel of a place. Even tiny, uncoordinated actions, such as playing music on a public bench, picking up trash, or using sidewalk chalk contribute to creating a vibrant environment. These voluntary, everyday actions send a powerful message that the space is cherished and lively, making it a place worth being. Pages marked with a "community" symbol of two people high-fiving offer opportunities for individual or small group involvement, alongside any listed key partners.



"A key principle of placemaking is about creating exciting environments that foster human interaction and innovation. If we fabricate an artificial space with too many top-down, preconceived ideas then we aren't allowing for natural evolution and development."

-Oliver Mathers, design officer at Design West

1. Develop a culture of community at The Hub CoWorks



2. Revitalize public spaces to foster community activities



3. Identify problem-solving alternatives to prohibitive signage



4. Increase housing opportunities with infill-focused action



5. Foster connection between the plaza and the core





Objective 1.

Develop a culture of community at The Hub CoWorks

The Hub in a rural context

The recently remodeled Hub CoWorks contains a mix of light-filled offices, common areas, meeting spaces, classrooms, a media studio, and a self-serve café. The staff are friendly and helpful, and regional art can be found on the walls.

A year into its launch, most private offices are filled, there are many hot desk users, and the classrooms are booked for nearly 100 hours monthly—a success for a rural co-working space in its first year.

The Hub CoWorks combines a dynamic coworking environment with top-tier amenities and a supportive community. Our membership experience fosters collaboration, creativity, and growth, making it the premier destination for freelancers, entrepreneurs, and forward-thinkers.

The Hub CoWorks, as described on their website.

However, for rural residents, terms like “incubator spaces” and “coworking spaces” might seem high-brow and foreign. These spaces can unintentionally convey exclusivity, more characteristic of a coastal, moneyed metropolis and potentially out of place in their hometown. To truly fulfill its potential as an inclusive innovation space, The Hub CoWorks should consider minor adjustments.

Building community culture

Many aspects of the Hub’s design function like a speak-easy: including the lack of a first-floor presence, the “Railside Café” that doesn’t have any food, and the immediate

presence of a space minder at the entrance, to name a few. If a place is hard to navigate or unwelcoming, people may not return.

Minor tweaks to the space’s design can remove most of these moments of friction that contribute to a less welcoming atmosphere. Additionally, moving towards a library-like atmosphere, offering additional reasons for the public to visit—such as classes, events, meet-ups, and professional drop-in hours—can attract a broader audience. This inclusivity enhances the space’s visibility as the place of opportunity that it is designed to be.

Placemaking Actions that support Objective 1:

- Facade activation p. 20
- Meet up at the Hub p. 25
- Hub backyard activation p. 26
- “Co-work, Co-play” Space p. 27



The Hub CoWorks is Rutland’s first coworking space, and is found on the second floor along Merchants Row.



A sign in the Hub, indicating where to find the Café, a well-equipped kitchen without any food.
©CORI



Objective 2.

Revitalize public spaces to foster community activities

The impact of space for people

The Innovation District's public space comprises sidewalks, Depot Park (including the Farmers Market area), and the Center Street Marketplace (CSM). During festivals, Center Street and occasionally Merchants Row close to vehicular traffic, temporarily multiplying public space. Since 2020, Center Street's parking spaces transform each summer into storefront extensions, leading to a 2022 scoping study that explored designs that prioritize people over passing through.

Despite this, park space is very limited in downtown, occupying only 1:12 of the land dedicated to vehicle storage (see map on page 48). Prioritizing public spaces like parks correlates positively with commerce and innovation, as giving people places to paint on an interactive art exhibit, socialize over a snack, or participate in a yoga class increases the opportunity for a transaction⁴ to take place at a local shop. In Brooklyn, a coffee shop near a park attracts double the visitors compared to elsewhere in the city⁵. Additionally, access to parkland was one of the only factors that significantly impacted

the presence of high-growth firms when measured against conventional indicators⁶.

Adding a little and inviting a lot

To foster community, we can start with small interventions that welcome interaction and invite existing groups to spend time there. The presence of people broadcasts that "this is a good place", so presence itself creates a virtuous cycle for more presence.

Placemaking Actions that support Objective 2:

- Take it outside p. 19
- Transit center spaces p. 23
- Indoor public space p. 24
- Hub backyard activation p.26
- Depot park p. 30
- Reaching the unhoused p. 31
- Free art wall p. 32
- Marketplace testing p. 33
- Accessible alleys p. 34
- Center St. for community p. 35
- Shopping plaza repair p. 41



The Center Street Marketplace is the largest greenspace within downtown. Multiple gated alleys lead to it. ©CORI



Various groups in Rutland "activate" public space in different ways: some is appreciated and others are less so.





Objective 3.

Identify problem-solving alternatives to prohibitive signage

What the signs say

In stark contrast to the welcoming wayfinding and gateway signage around town, downtown has an abundance of prohibitive signs, restricting anything from trespassing, to smoking, to the use of roller skis. Compared to other towns of the same size, they dominate the visual landscape. However, the effectiveness of such prohibitive signage is questionable, as it often stems from a design failure and may even be unintentionally inviting the very behavior it aims to prevent.

Often, these kinds of signs emerge as a re-

action to an undesirable incident, ranging from seemingly harmless actions like walking through an alley to more harmful behaviors like smoking near children. Many property stewards would argue that “No” signs proactively address ignorance and facilitate intervention. Questions on enforceability aside, what isn’t addressed by the “No” sign is the reason the behavior is happening in the first place.

Signage as product design

In product design, when people repeatedly use a product the wrong way, it means that the design needs to be adjusted so that it is easier to use it the right way. “No” is reserved for only the most hazardous of misuses.

Spaces can be designed to reduce misuse as well. For example, in the Center Street Marketplace, the ramp to the Bardwell House subtly communicates its non-public nature through design: many windows look down on it, and there aren’t places to sit. For anyone looking to hang out, there are better public spots nearby. In contrast, the Rutland Transit Center says “stay off” the curbs, yet has few benches for its many bus riders to sit on.

With the amount of “No” signs Rutland has, it sends the signal that a higher-than-average amount of rule-breaking behavior takes place, decreasing people’s interest in being there. If we instead design public and public-facing spaces in ways that address causes, we create more opportunity for goodwill and trust to build. These are foundational to fostering a more resilient community.



Placemaking Actions that support Objective 3:

- Downtown signage policy p. 21
- Transit center signage p. 22

These signs and more were all seen on a walk within Rutland's Innovation District in June, 2023 ©CORI



Objective 4.

Increase housing opportunities with infill-focused action

The basics of affordable housing

Vermont faces significant challenges in the realm of affordable housing, navigating a complex system overseen by the Department of Housing and Community Development. This department manages funds from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, distributing them to entities like the Vermont State Housing Authority, Vermont Housing Finance Authority, and Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. These organizations, in turn, provide loans

to nonprofit housing developers, such as the Housing Trust of Rutland County, to construct affordable housing for individuals with low or very low incomes.

Housing stock—and options

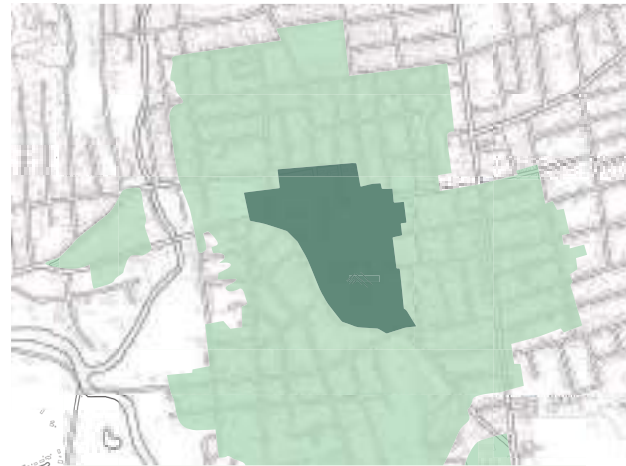
Vermont's commitment to conservation, exemplified by Act 250 in 1970, has preserved its rural character by regulating land use and development through the Natural Resources Board. However, density-restricting bylaws, lack of housing stock, and the rural COVID land rush has left community members such as teachers and nurses unable to afford homes in the face of increased demand

from wealthier buyers.

Addressing this issue necessitates a shift in housing strategies. A Housing Action Plan and the creation of a TIF district, focusing on mixed-use, mixed-income, and missing middle-based renovations and infills, offers a viable path forward. Understanding where the opportunities for added units are in downtown and near downtown could open up pathways for handy individuals and small groups. This approach seeks to diversify housing types beyond single-family homes in low-density neighborhoods, aiming to alleviate the housing crisis and provide opportunities for both current and future residents.



A market rate space formerly used as a dorm, this is one of several apartments set to open soon. ©CORI



The green areas make up the Neighborhood Development Area, where some development is Act 250-exempt.

Placemaking Actions that support Objective 4:

- Reaching the unhoused p. 31
- Shopping plaza repair p. 41
- Housing action plan p.43
- Making room on your block p.45
- Incentivise Infill p.47
- Mixed-use living p.49



Objective 5.

Foster connection between the plaza and the core

A brief history of a wide street

In the automobile age, the Evelyn Street to Merchants Row to Strongs Avenue thoroughfare (noted as EMS Ave going forward), separates ornate multistory mixed-use buildings from plain, single-story big box stores. However, this division has not always been so pronounced.

In the late 1840s, the introduction of train lines through what is now the Rutland Shopping Plaza prompted the construction of multi-story brick buildings on Merchants Row. At this time, EMS Ave was likely a mixed-use

market-focused space. In the early 1880s, the street evolved into a multi-modal thoroughfare with lanes for pedestrians, trolleys, carriages, and vehicle storage. The 1920s saw automobiles replace trolleys, and in the 1960s the rail yard became a shopping plaza.

Since then, EMS Ave, like many U.S. streets, has primarily catered to unimpeded vehicular flow, featuring two sidewalks, one lane in each direction for driving, parking lanes, and turning lanes at intersections.

EMS as a bridge

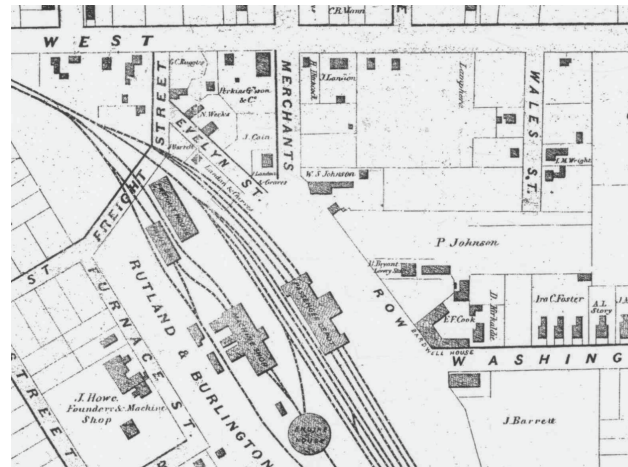
There are opportunities to reimagine EMS Ave as a “compact, pedestrian-oriented...

mixed-use” place, aligning with the priorities outlined in the 2020 Master Plan for the Downtown Business District.

For an “innovation district” to thrive, EMS Ave and the spaces along it need to act as a bridge instead of a crevasse. A detailed plan will be needed to fully transform this corridor. Initiating this involves dreaming big and starting with small actions. Some action may challenge perceptions rooted in the belief that streets exist primarily for the consistent movement of motor vehicles — a notion that only arose in the last century.



A postcard of Merchants Row from the 1910's, depicting a wide multi-modal street. ©Rutland Historical Society



Map of the Village of Rutland, circa 1852
©Rutland Historical Society

Placemaking Actions that support Objective 5:

- Facade activation p. 20
- Hub backyard activation p. 26
- Evelyn street lot p. 29
- Depot park p. 30
- EMC crosswalk adjustment p. 32
- Reimagining streets p. 39
- Shopping plaza repair p. 41
- Deter lacking land use p. 47
- Mixed use living p. 49

Placemaking: Actions, plans, and other suggestions

These projects (some of which have already been happening) each support one or more of the **objectives**, and are examples of how to make progress towards achieving them.

Some projects are simple and may not require special permission or planning, while others involve many **key partners** working together over a longer period of time.

Project costs

Approximate cost ranges for Placemaking Actions are outlined as follows and represent a general guide.

- \$ = \$0 - \$5,000
- \$\$ = \$5,000 - \$50,000
- \$\$\$ = > \$50,000

Time frames for delivery

The Plan articulates placemaking actions suitable for delivery in the following time frames:

- Up to 1 year **Short-Term**
- 1-3 years **Mid-Term**
- 3-5 years **Long-Term**

Some long term projects may continue on past five years to be fully realized.

Pre-placemaking project checklist

With public and public-facing projects, there's a greater chance for success if you go through the following list first:

1. Spend time in the place just observing what it's like there and who visits.
2. Who owns the space that the potential project will be on? For public places, what is the process like for using it?
3. Who else has a stake in this space, or who else uses it? Is it adjacent to local business owners, is it frequented by local youth, who decorates or cleans it?

Acronyms for some Key Partners

- RRA:** Rutland Redevelopment Authority
- DRP:** Downtown Rutland Partnership
- CAO:** Come Alive Outside
- DPW:** Department of Public Works
- RHT:** Rutland Housing Authority
- P&R:** Rutland Parks & Recreation Department
- CEDDR:** Chamber and Economic Development for the Rutland Region
- RRPC:** Rutland Regional Planning Commission

4. What plans have been made about this place in the past? Check with your city and county planning organizations, such as the Rutland Regional Planning Commission or the Rutland Redevelopment Authority.
5. What changes do the owners, users, and other stakeholders want to see?
6. Who else that has done a similar project can vouch for the idea or provide advice?

Golden Questions of Placemaking:

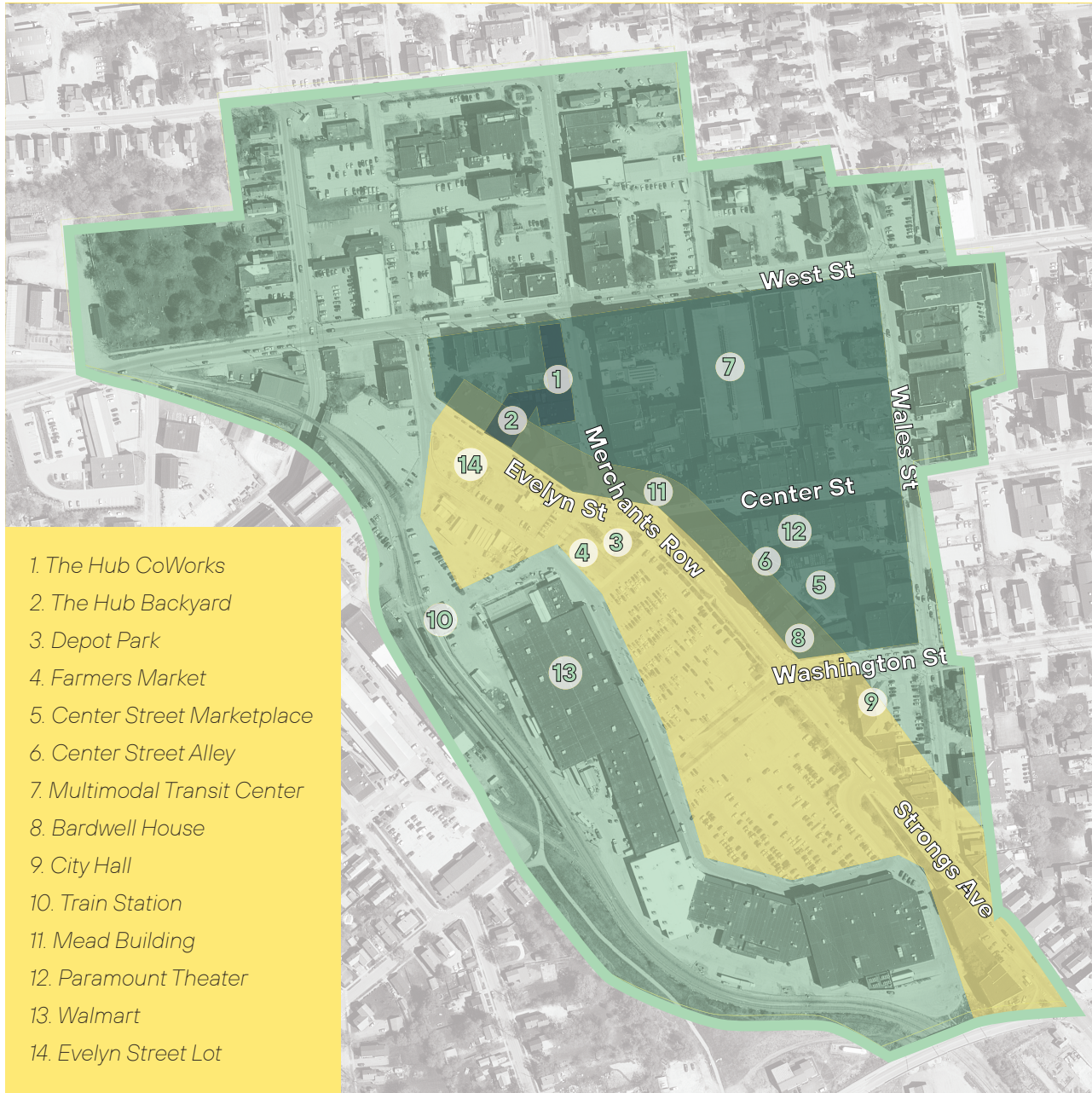
When a project hits a snag, whether it be hesitant property owners or infrastructure disagreements, ask yourself the following:

1. Does this idea uplift the needs of those with the greatest connection to a space?
2. Is there a Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper (LQC) way of testing the idea?



A "Lighter Quicker Cheaper" project in the Evelyn Street Lot that came out of early discussions. ©CORI

Key locations for placemaking actions



- 1. The Hub CoWorks
- 2. The Hub Backyard
- 3. Depot Park
- 4. Farmers Market
- 5. Center Street Marketplace
- 6. Center Street Alley
- 7. Multimodal Transit Center
- 8. Bardwell House
- 9. City Hall
- 10. Train Station
- 11. Mead Building
- 12. Paramount Theater
- 13. Walmart
- 14. Evelyn Street Lot

The Hub CoWorks

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- Hub backyard activation p. 26
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The Core

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Downtown Business District

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- Downtown signage policy p. 21
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- Making room on your block p.45
- Incentivise Infill p. 47
- Mixed use living p. 49

Placemaking actions

Take it outside

\$\$\$

ShortTerm

Background

In the city of Rutland, the shared outdoor space is most often seen being used to get from one place to another: people can be seen walking, rolling, driving, biking, and skateboarding all throughout downtown.

Evidence of human transportation is a helpful baseline, as it illustrates that downtown contains places that people feel safe going to. This is something some rural downtowns have lost, and it's much harder to build back from there.

Additionally, since 2020 downtown has been activated for more-than-transportation on a seasonal basis, with outdoor restaurant seating on Center Street bustling most evenings. Yet, the seating that is out all year round—benches in parks and on sidewalks—remains underutilized.

As social animals, we take cues from others on how to act. If we rarely see other people outside in downtown other than for transportation, or if the only people we do see aren't in our peer group, we're less likely to spend time outside ourselves.

For downtown Rutland to be a place with



Key partners: *Downtown Rutland Partnership, Come Alive Outside*

the kind of deeper and wider social networks where innovation thrives, public space should be active more often than not. One of the simplest things a community member can do to improve a place is simply to activate it by doing something outside themselves.

LQC placemaking actions

The following are a list of quick activities anyone can do in a public place, without prior planning or permission, to contribute to a thriving downtown:

- Reading a book or magazine
- Sketching or drawing in a notebook
- Drawing with sidewalk chalk
- Tinkering with something (ex. a hand puzzle)
- Playing music (not too loudly)
- Taking pictures of something
- Meeting up with others
- Picking up and disposing of trash
- Doing yoga or other exercises

When you do these kinds of activities in the public eye, you give other people the idea that downtown is a safe and welcome place for them to be outside doing things, too.



Project stakeholders chatting in a park. ©CORI



Community members playing music on a bench. ©CORI

Placemaking actions

Facade activation

\$ \$\$

Short Term

The state of building fronts

In downtowns, when we see doors with tidy stoops, windows with thriving plants, and other evidence of places where people have been or can be, it tells us that the space is cared for.

Many of our more modern building facades have fewer doors, or doors that blend seamlessly with tinted windows, with little more than sterile hallways visible inside. These designs are efficient and easy to clean, but they also lack that human element that many people feel makes spaces welcoming.

Key partners: *Downtown Rutland Partnership, Business Owners*

LQC placemaking actions

While grand renovations may be helpful for the most sterile of spaces, decorating the inside and outside of buildings can make downtown feel more lively. A goal to shoot for is for all storefronts, even second-floor ones like the Hub CoWorks, to enliven the street-level experience in some way.

The Downtown Rutland Partnership's Holiday Window Contest is a great example of how many people can be encouraged to activate their facades. Continuing and expanding on this program can foster a culture of great spaces, one storefront at a time.



A storefront window without welcoming elements. ©CORI



Photos of various storefronts in downtown Rutland, showcasing individual creativity for the holiday window contest. © Downtown Rutland Partnership



Placemaking actions

Downtown signage policy

\$ \$

Short Term

Background

Prohibitive signage (“No” signs), with as common as they are in downtown, contribute negatively to the character of town.

While it may seem over-the-top to regulate the character of signage, the City of Rutland’s Sign Ordinance’s “Purpose and Intent” section already does:

“1. Set standards...that improve the visual appearance of the city... as well as the City’s goals related to the character of the city.”

“5. Ensure sign design, especially in the historic areas, builds on the traditional town image and desired visual environment.”

Furthermore, *“signs... not in conformance with this Ordinance constitute violations and are subject to enforcement.”*

Now, signs signifying “posted areas, or the like” that are under 2 square feet are exempt from these regulations, so most “No” signs don’t currently require permits or a review.

Yet, if these small signs are taking away from the “desired visual environment,” there’s a case to be made for regulating them and encouraging proactive solutions in their place, where reasonable.

Key partners: Planning & Zoning, DPW, Downtown Property Stewards



An example of “Prohibitive Signage” in CSM. ©CORI



An example of “Proactive Signage” in CSM. ©CORI

LQC placemaking actions

The first approach is to lobby that any sign that contradicts the “Purpose and Intent” of the ordinance could be considered for review.

This can be done by reading the sign ordinance, writing up suggested changes, and sharing them with the City/Aldermen.

The second approach is to connect with property stewards, understand why they put up a “no” sign, and see if they might consider a more effective alternative.

A helpful way to approach signage writing can be to ask, “How would I share this information with a valued someone?” Evaluate the “no” and determine which category it falls into to find a more effective solution.

Proactive design opportunity:

There is an unmet need; fix through design.

Proactive signage opportunity:

It could be said better; rewrite without “no.”

Crying wolf doesn’t help anyone:

This is unlikely to ever happen; remove.

No really, ‘No’ is necessary:

This is likely, a hazard, and unfixable; keep.

For examples of these, see p. 59.

Placemaking actions



Transit center signage

\$ \$\$ **ShortTerm**

Background

There are many signs in downtown Rutland that contribute to public and public-facing space feeling less welcoming. Some spaces, like the Rutland Multi-Modal Transit Center, are more welcoming to some paying users and less welcoming towards other paying users.

The message for bus riders, distilled, is: *Welcome, No, No, No, No, No, Violators will be Trespassed.*
 The message for car drivers, distilled, is: *Attention, Important Please Read, If assistance is needed...*

It should be noted that the car parking section of the transit center is managed by a private company, and technically the “welcome” sign applies to all users. But the locations of signs and fine print say a lot about who they’re meant for. The LAZ sign also illustrates that “No” isn’t the only way for signage to effectively share rules and important information (it’s a good example of “Proactive” signage).

One might argue that the “welcome” sign is designed to be simple and straightforward. Yet it ends with “Violators will be trespassed.”

Key partners: State of Vermont, LAZ Parking, Marble Valley Transit, DRP

Trespassed can mean “evicted from the premises for a certain period of time,” but that use is rare and primarily used in legal settings. Legal jargon that’s clearly directed at some users and not others only reinforces ideas that run counter to the Rutland that holds positive opportunities for everyone.

LQC placemaking actions

For a detailed signage evaluation process, refer to the downtown signage policy on the previous page, p. 21. For transit specific considerations, consider the tactics below:

1. If you don’t already, try taking the bus somewhere. Spend time in the Transit Center to better understand the space.
2. Talk to Transit Center employees and bus users to understand their concerns.
3. Develop a signage draft and suggestions of changes, with reasons for why these changes would create better compliance, and set up a meeting with the transit center director.
4. If they’re willing to test out a new sign, print several at a local print shop and tape them in front of the existing signs. Depending on size, you may need to fill out a Sign Permit per Rutland’s Sign Ordinance.



A sign found at the entrance to the Transit Center. ©CORI



A sign found at the parking entrance. ©CORI.

Placemaking actions

Transit center spaces

\$ \$

ShortTerm

Background

There is a passageway between Center Street near the Paramount Theater and the Multimodal Transit Center. Though it used to be publicly accessible, a lack of public restrooms downtown resulted in people relieving themselves in the space occasionally.

It now can only be accessed by scanning a parking pass or ticket from using the parking garage. It also leads to the bus platform, but bus tickets won't open the doors.

The parking garage part of the Center is used more than public perception believes it to be, and it is kept clean, though there is graffiti in the stairwells and on the deck. Some people have expressed concern over the safety, though there haven't been reported incidences to back them up.



The views from the top floor of the parking garage are some of the best in downtown Rutland. ©CORI



Key partners: LAZ Parking, Chaffee Art Center, Marble Valley Transit/State of VT, DRP, DPW

LQC placemaking actions

Overall, both of these spaces represent opportunities for community care. The tunnel space could advertise upcoming shows at the Paramount and events throughout town. Making the Center's bathroom an all-hours public one would give people an appropriate place to "go", eliminating the need to keep it locked and allowing additional uses to be explored (see the idea on the next page, p. 24).

Embracing town's mural culture, the stairwells could be sites for a mural festival where each artist paints a landing.

For many people, the parking garage represents their first impression of and welcome to town: Given the creativity and verve in Rutland, the first impression could be made more accurate through these changes.



A view of the Transit Tunnel. ©CORI



With few people around, it's a prime graffiti spot. ©CORI

Placemaking actions

Indoor public space

\$ \$\$

Short Term

Background

If downtown Rutland's outdoor public space is small, its indoor public space is essentially non-existent.

In a cold climate, many people shared that they almost never go downtown in the winter because there's no where warm to just be.

Example: Fire pits and community living rooms

In Saratoga State Park in New York, there are outdoor fire pits and even a "warming hut" with a roaring fireplace inside.

These amenities are monitored by park staff and only available during the day, but their presence allows visitors to have an additional reason to stop by.

Throughout Massachusetts and beyond, the nonprofit Culture House (culturehouse.cc) has been working with towns to create "community living rooms": community centers that often first exist as pop-up's in underutilized spaces near dense areas.

LQC placemaking actions

In Rutland, this could be a space for down-



Key partners: *DRP, City of Rutland, Parks and Recreation Department, RRA*



A Community Livingroom © Culture House

town apartment-dwellers to stretch their legs, for home school students to socialize, for anyone to learn a skill from a neighbor, for teens to be silly with their friends, and for outsiders or people new in town to build connections.

A space that has long been for rent could be used for such a pop-up, which would also get eyes on the space to demonstrate its utility to potential renters. Or, the Transit Center

Tunnel could be a pop-up spot for an extension of "facade activation (p.20), some stools and books, or even a mini-projected movie event (ensuring that there's room for the occasional Center user to move through).

Similarly, a monthly or weekly winter chiminea and hot cocoa event in Depot Park or the Center Street Marketplace could bring people together at the time of year that they tend to be furthest apart.

Placemaking actions

Meet-up at The Hub

\$ \$\$

Short Term



Key partners: *The Hub CoWorks, Chamber and Economic Development for the Rutland Region*

cater to the whole market — but it is possible to start too small and limit early growth.

The language we use in marketing and who we reach out to will impact who responds and ends up using a space. The Hub website uses words like **top-tier** and **premier** to describe the space, and one of the perks of membership is access to **exclusive** events.

These words fit the “prestigious” world of entrepreneurship. In a place like Rutland City, this means that despite its goal of inspiring a regional culture and community of tech innovation, some potential founders may make the call that The Hub CoWorks is not for them before they even get to the front desk.

LQC Placemaking Actions

The Hub CoWorks might look to other local and regional organizations that cater to a wide variety of self-motivated individuals, such as Rutland Young Professionals or the Chaffee Art Center, for marketing insights.

In Bradford VT, The Space on Main sets a community-focused tone in their marketing language, which helps it to attract more total users from a wider pool.



Stakeholders at a workshop at The Hub CoWorks. ©CORI

Additionally, the following actions may reach future founders:

- Once-a-week coworking drop-in mornings, with coffee from a sponsoring business
- Invitations to local nonprofits to host a board meeting once a year
- Group rates for all-remote companies to use the coworking space or meeting rooms
- Hosting community events, or being the “home base” for larger outdoor events
- Coordination with local educational groups to host classes or workshops

Background

The Hub CoWorks is working hard to attract people from the Rutland area and beyond to be part of a thriving coworking and business incubation space. In a rural town, even regular deals on membership can make taking the first step inside a challenge.

The space seems accessible: It hosts a variety of events, and one can schedule a tour of the space from their website.

Adoption of any new place takes time, but to speed it up and include a wider pool of potential entrepreneurs, The Hub could consider how they market to the local population.

Who is invited to The Hub?

In an ideal rural innovation hub, everyone is invited to use the space, with programming designed to help specific groups, like tech entrepreneurs, take their ideas to the next level. In rural places it’s especially helpful to be inclusive, because such hubs rarely have the luxury of density to only attract one type of entrepreneur.

After all, a coworking and business incubator space, like any business, needs to be able to support itself. Most products or services don’t

Placemaking actions

Hub backyard activation

\$\$

Mid-Term

Background

The yard behind the Hub CoWorks was once a regular through way for train-takers and pedestrians, leading to a building pass-through that acted as a shortcut to the shops inside as well as the rest of Merchants Row. A long-vacant hot dog hut remains from when this space saw greater activity.

Beyond the dusty-silled structure, the space hosts several stately trees and large bushes, a few natural gas access points, and a crumbling staircase off to one side.

Past placemaking actions

Come Alive Outside hosted a pop-up pizza-off event in August of 2023 following one of the placemaking workshops, with just a folding table and pizzas from three of Rutland's most popular pizza spots.

As there were more slices per pie than participants, additional locals were invited to rate pizzas and spend time in the space.

As is, the space worked well for a simple pop-up event, had a fair amount of shade in the late afternoon, and only would have benefited from the presence of chairs and perhaps a water fountain.



Key partners: *The Hub CoWorks, Chamber and Economic Development for the Rutland Region*



Photo of the Hub backyard at present. ©CORI



Illustration of the Hub backyard with focus coves

LQC placemaking actions

Future plans for the Hub CoWorks may include a second floor deck for members to enjoy. Until that can be built, the Hub has an instant asset in the ground floor outdoor space if movable seating or even "hot desk"-like spaces were to be added.

Testing ideas like this — including inviting and hosting events in this space — will allow the future of the space to be one that can be invested in, and then often and fully utilized.

Future opportunities

Barring those insights, a backyard to the Hub would benefit from a main sidewalk that is shifted to the east side of the property.

A secondary sidewalk could form a loop for brief strolls. Greenery and a water feature would foster a sense of calm in the space.

This arrangement would facilitate the creation of a variety of more open and more secluded, cove-like green spaces with places to take calls, sit down for a lunch meeting, or socialize over a networking event. The furniture and art should be designed by local creatives to ensure that it has a distinctly Rutland feel.

Placemaking actions

“Co-work, Co-play” Space

\$\$

Mid-Term



Key partners: *The Hub CoWorks, Wonderfeet Kids Museum*

Background

Economic studies have found every dollar spent on high-quality early childhood programs yielded a return of \$4-\$9⁷, which is better than the average return on investment for a startup. Yet for parents with children under the age of five, finding affordable, reliable, convenient childcare in Rutland City can be a challenge.

Recent Vermont legislative initiatives aim to increase the availability of care through expanding state subsidies for medium income families, ensuring that low-income families pay nothing out of pocket, and pushing the reimbursement rate for providers 35% higher.

Higher reimbursement rates make it easier for people to consider working for or starting a childcare service, where hourly rates have hovered around \$15 without benefits. However, it may take some time for these changes to be accessible to most people with young children.

For now, finding a care service that fits an entrepreneurial lifestyle can be challenging, but in Washington an innovative approach is making a difference for parents, children, and providers.



One of the “Co-Play” rooms at the Inc. © The Inc

Example: Co-work and co-play

A Seattle-based nonprofit, The Inc Coworking, launched a “Co-work, Co-play” space in 2017 with an aim to “remove the unique challenges that women face in business.” Open to moms as well as dads, there is a license-exempt staffed preschool, rooms for parents and children to play and work, and parent-only rooms for work.

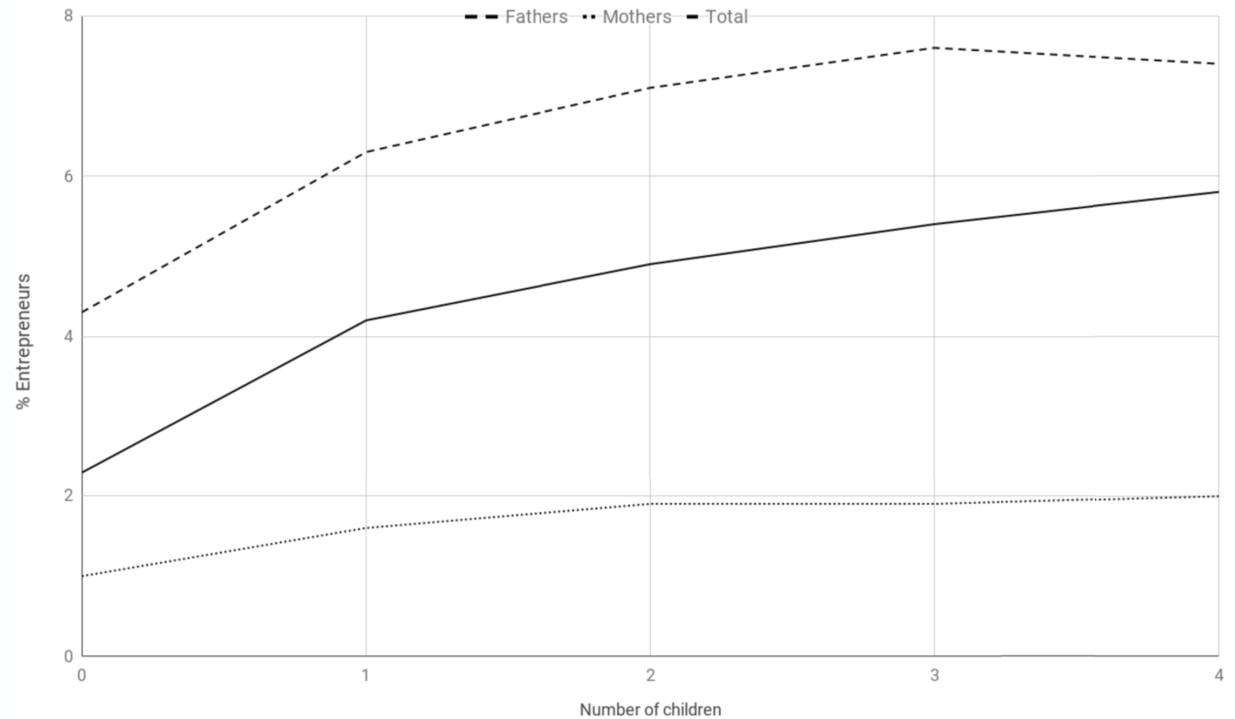
Other amenities, such as fast wifi, printers, meeting space, coffee, and a break room make the space fully functional as a coworking space.

The Inc also hosts events to help women re-enter the workforce after having children, facilitates networking and mentoring opportunities, and supports women interested in starting their own businesses.

There are a variety of memberships available, from unlimited access to the co-work/co-play space to punch cards or full-time options for the in-building preschool. The memberships include access to career-related events held at lunchtime and in the evenings. To make it easier to consider, first-time visitors can schedule a free, two-hour trial.

What the studies show

According to a study on entrepreneurship among parents, “there is a clear tendency that the odds of becoming an entrepreneur increase with the number of children. This effect is true for both men and women but appears to be slightly stronger for fathers



Number of children and entry into business ownership

Percent of entrepreneurs compared to number of children, Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, 2018

than for mothers.⁸”

Thus, exploring ideas that combine childcare and entrepreneurship in Rutland would likely be more than just a community good and a convenient service for a variety of workers: it likely would help The Hub in its goals of standing out as a regional innovation hub.

LQC placemaking actions

Ultimately, building out a “Co-work, Co-play” space within or near The Hub CoWorks would give entrepreneurial parents the greatest amount of flexibility. Yet, a multi-functional space takes time and funding to build out.

Thus, in the meantime a key first step would be to have childcare available at entrepreneurship events at The Hub CoWorks. This would paint a picture of how many entrepreneurs with limited childcare access live in the community.

Additionally, a day or time that sees limited use at The Hub could be designated as a “Co-play” day, where a classroom area is turned into a space that supports work and play, and members with children are invited to bring them along. While daycares are still in short supply, small tests like this could bridge a gap.

Placemaking actions

Evelyn Street lot

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ShortTerm

Background

The Evelyn Street lot is directly across from the rear entrance and backyard of the Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region and the Hub CoWorks. It is the former site of Rutland's first parking garage, torn down in 2003, and is 1/4 acre of the 17.75 acre Rutland Shopping Plaza owned by Brixmor Property Group.

Jersey barriers and weeds are interspersed among the crumbling concrete. Sitting alongside the primary artery of the Innovation District, some locals regard it as a daily eyesore while others find it to be entirely invisible, blending in among the impervious surface sprawl of the nearby parking lots.

Past placemaking actions

Innovation District stakeholders Rick Gile and Scott Graves determined that drawing positive attention to the property through local art affixed to the barriers could be a helpful initial step to begin changing the way that both locals and property stewards relate to the lot.

In August of 2023, they gave 4 x 4 panels to three local artists and developed a method



Key partners: Brixmor Property Group, DRP, Chafee Art Center, DPW, RRA

of affixing the panels to the barriers, so that the art could easily be installed or removed as needed. The panels and a whiteboard with markers were installed ahead of that month's Friday Night Live event, which was taking place on closed off streets nearby.

Brixmor, as a nationwide real estate company, has little financial incentive to beautify or consider alternatives for a small lot in a relatively small town. Yet they were willing to let community members test out a way to add art and interaction to the space.

For a plot of land on a key site near The Hub CoWorks, that's a small but significant step that illustrates that this space could, with community care, be more than it has been recently.

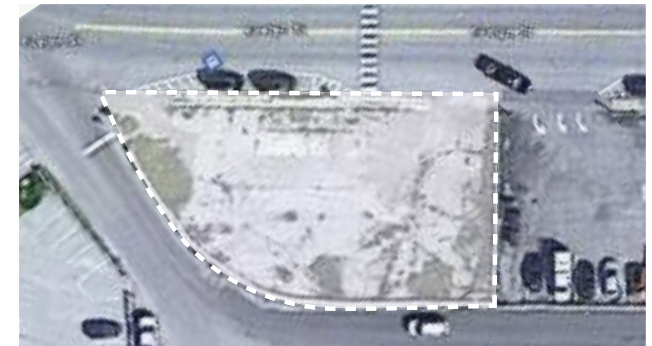
LQC placemaking actions

Installing additional "light touches" of art, along with locally relevant material to sit on (such as stacked railroad ties), could continue to draw positive attention to the site.

This art could include full-size chalk layout drawings or 2D renderings of how the site could fill a local need, to build support for more significant future change.



A view of the Evelyn Street Lot in June of 2023. ©CORI



A satellite view of the Evelyn Street lot. ©Google



Rick Gile sharing the project with stakeholders. ©CORI

Placemaking actions

Depot Park

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ShortTerm

Background

Depot Park is a plot of grass between the Innovation District's busiest intersection and the Walmart parking lot.

In the recent past it was a site of contention, primarily occupied by people who had few other places to go. Benches that had been there were removed to discourage use of the park. Over the past few years, the site has benefited from the efforts of community groups such as the Rutland Garden Club and Come Alive Outside.

Past placemaking actions

In April of 2023, Come Alive Outside raised \$10,000 from community members to re-imagine Depot Park. In reaching the funding goal, they also received a matching grant of \$20,000 from Vermont's Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Better Places program.

Since May of 2022, Come Alive Outside and the City of Rutland have been gathering community feedback to determine what exactly it would take to make this a space where people in the community of different ages, backgrounds, needs, and interests to feel safe and welcome.



Key partners: *Come Alive Outside, Rutland City Parks and Recreation, DRP, DPW, RRA*



A rendering showing how Depot Park could look.



Tulpi Chair Installation Celebration ©Arwen Turner

The funding allows them to install an accessible game table, small jump-able platforms, and a music garden. Several fold-up, spinning seats called "Tulpi Chairs" were unveiled and celebrated in October of 2023.

Prior to breaking ground on any changes, Come Alive Outside hosted multiple events that brought temporary seating and games to Depot Park. This encouraged people who had preconceived notions about the space to see it as a place for everyone.

Future opportunities

Come Alive Outside (comealiveoutside.com) fosters the spirit of placemaking in all that they do. As they and others continue to steward this fishbowl-like site, it will be important to strike a balance between listening to those who spend the most time there and creating opportunities that welcome additional visitors into the space.

With a \$75K grant for a landscaping design plan that will cover Depot Park, both sides of the train tracks, and other nearby public lands, there are opportunities on the horizon for this section of town to become a greener gateway to downtown.

Placemaking actions

Reaching the unhoused

\$\$

Short Term

Background

“Homelessness has been a challenge in Vermont for years,” said Angus Chaney, Executive Director of the Homeless Prevention Center. “It’s usually an indicator of some other system — economics, mental health, substance use — that’s broken or overwhelmed.”

In 2022, Rutland County alone had over 500 unhoused individuals⁹, which is almost 1% of its population, many of whom are in or near the City of Rutland.

Throughout the pandemic, many Vermonters have been housed in local hotels, but with the end of many voucher programs in 2023 and 2024, and a larger presence of unhoused people in downtown Rutland, placemaking tactics could build community while connecting people in need to key services.

Example: Recharge stations

In New York City’s Times Square, a nonprofit called Fountainhouse and the design group Project for Public Spaces teamed up to build a kiosk where anyone could sit down, charge their electronics, have a free coffee, or engage in conversation with a social worker.



Key partners: Homeless Prevention Center, DRP, RHT, RRA, Neighborworks of Western VT, P&R



Time Square Recharge Station ©Courtney D. Garvin



A Ferla Cart, which can be easily moved. ©Ferla Carts

It’s a location all can use, which is crucial for building trust for those who are wary or have felt let down by service systems.

As relationships are built, needs are shared. On a typical day, the kiosk may facilitate obtaining ID cards, Social Security cards, benefits, doctor’s appointments, housing applications, and more.

LQC idea: Recharge cart

This tactic could be helpful in public places that see a fair number of chronically unhoused folks AND are otherwise low in daily community interaction, such as Depot Park.

It would give a wide variety of community members a reason to be in the space while also serving as a low-stakes way to ask about connections to different services.

A coffee cart that makes an appearance for four hours once a week, staffed by a regular group of volunteers who know these services well, could test this idea.

Rutland’s social service groups already coordinate during times of great need. A slow, persistent drip could be addressed with a consistent, place-based solution that makes public space better for all users.

Placemaking actions

Free art wall

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ShortTerm



Key partners: *The City of Rutland, Rutland Parks & Recreation, Chaffee Art Center, RRA*

Background

Throughout downtown Rutland and especially in the Center Street Marketplace, the markings of bored teenagers can be found in the form of graffiti. Considering that even ancient Greece had its fair share of public space scrawlings, preventing this human tendency may not be possible.

But where and how it happens may be shift-able. Doing so could help an often scape-goated group feel welcome in public in ways that are good for everyone.

The case for a free art wall

A free art wall is an unmonitored space for the public creation of art. Rutland already has drop-in participatory spaces for a variety of activities that provide outlets to groups including teenagers—mostly for sports—so an art wall would merely extend the definition of public recreation to include creative expression. After seeing successful programs in places like Ontario¹⁰, many towns of all sizes are creating their own.

LQC placemaking actions

There are many different ways to test out a free art wall project, and given Rutland's



A potential free art wall candidate in the CSM. ©CORI

myriad artists with mural experience, implementation of the below ideas would benefit from their insights.

It could be permanently on a wall, it could be on temporary materials, it could be a blank area set aside as part of a larger mural, or it could be designated for chalk only. As an ongoing project, this one should have a steward who can check in on the art on a weekly basis.

A good candidate, if the building owners are on board, would be the walls near the stair-

well in the Center Street Marketplace. This is already a place that local teens feel welcome in, that also sees regular public use. However, any place that has a balance of visibility and comfort could be a good location.

1. Find a location for the “free art wall.” Ensure that the local property owners are in support of the project.

2. Talk to the teens who spend time in the space, or at least put up a flyer so that they're aware of the project. See what insights or ideas they have to make it successful.

3. Raise money for an initial painting and buy supplies. Budget for \$300 per 100 sq ft.

4. Prime the wall or a wall-covering surface such as plywood or mural cloth.

5. Invite teens as well as other community members to draw and paint initial ideas together over a weekend.

6. Schedule occasional opportunities to add to the wall to encourage use. Creatively cover offensive material, allowing anything else.

Tip: If property owners are hesitant about having paint on their walls, demonstrating the concept with plywood or another type of temporary canvas could help.

Placemaking actions

Marketplace testing

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ShortTerm

Background

The Center Street Marketplace (CSM) is the Downtown Business District's largest public park¹, yet it is very underutilized.

Outside of attendees at scheduled events, patrons of Roots, and the occasional dog walker, few people spend time here. This is in spite of multiple murals, marble sculptures, and plans to make the space something more.

Making progress on a free art wall (p. 32) and alley access (p. 34) would impact perception and use of the CSM. However, longstanding use patterns can be challenging to overcome.

We can look to the approaches that the Downtown Rutland Partnership and Come Alive Outside have taken regarding Depot Park to encourage new patterns of use, test additional needs, and plan to make bigger changes based on what is learned.

LQC placemaking actions

A simple action that the city's Recreation and Parks Department could take to encourage park use would be to add the CSM to the list of parks on their website.



Key partners: Rutland Parks and Recreation, Come Alive Outside, DRP, Bardwell House

Sharing park features and rules online can foster increased use and activity.

Additionally, it's unclear what the threshold is for reserving a park, leaving people to question if they need to spend \$30 on a processing fee to have a casual game of frisbee with friends.

When there is easy access to information, small groups and individuals are more likely to use and reserve public spaces.

Beyond these simple changes, the following ideas could increase use of the CSMP:

- Add a seasonal "shade structure" and simple movable seating like bark-stripped logs
- Add a little Free Library or activity cabinet
- Bring in corn hole boards and beanbags or other lawn games for seasonal use
- Invite various community groups to use the space (such as small business management seminars for artisans and tradespeople)
- Host a found-material sculpture build, and display the pieces alongside another event



An empty CSM in the late afternoon in summer. ©CORI



An event in CSM by Come Alive Outside ©Arwen Turner

¹ The land is owned by Steele Champlain LLC, but is a City Park with no restrictions. Rutland Innovation District Placemaking Plan

Placemaking actions

Accessible alleys

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ShortTerm



Key partners: *DRP, City of Rutland, Rutland Parks and Recreation, DPW, RRA, Property Owners*

Background

There are four alleys that lead from the Center Street Marketplace (CSM) to Center Street, Merchants Row, Washington Street, and Wales Street. All entryways are able to be gated, two are occasionally still gated in the middle of the day, and one is gated at nearly all times.

Furthermore, some of these gates are far down the alleyway and not visible from the street.

For anyone looking to spend time in the park, stop by the restaurant, Roots, or cut through the park to get to their destination, the chance of encountering a locked gate and then having to double back adds friction or even frustration to an experience that might otherwise be positive.

When a path dead ends, its options for use become limited. With limited use comes fewer eyes, and a lack of visibility creates a prime space for antisocial behaviors.

Although these gates are meant to encourage open-hours rule-following behavior, they unintentionally create conditions that allow for trash and unwanted graffiti to build up.

In an innovation district where park space can be a determining factor in retaining entrepreneurs, negative experiences with the nearest parks should be minimized.

Past placemaking actions

During the placemaking project, volunteers including Brian Budrow spent time in the alley between the CSM and Center Street, beautifying it by cleaning up renovation debris and other garbage.

He observed that after cleaning the space, most garbage that did show up was cleaned up by others within 48 hours. Caring for the alley had activated a sense of care or ownership of it in others.

LQC placemaking actions

Aside from the Wales Street alley, which has limited public utility, it would be beneficial to ensure that the other three gates are always opened during park open hours.

If this isn't realistic, it may be beneficial to remove the gates, even if another security measure such as a camera is added.

This is especially true for the Center Street entrance.



The grand entryway to the Center Street Alley. ©CORI



A regularly locked gate from the alley to the park. ©CORI

Placemaking actions

Center St. for community

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Mid-Term

Background

After two years of testing pandemic-prompted bump outs that created more space for people, a scoping study was commissioned by the city to explore options, community interests, and costs for a permanent change on Center Street.

Nearly all people surveyed as part of this process, facilitated by DuBois & King Inc, wanted something significant to change, whether it be a one-lane one-way or a fully car-free esplanade. While there are concerns



An option from the Center Street Scoping Study, with Center Street redesigned as a one-way with additional public space, © DuBois & King, Inc



Key partners: *Downtown Rutland Partnership, City of Rutland, Public Works Department*

that the study didn't prioritize the needs of those most local to Center Street, the City of Rutland is committed to making a change that nearby business owners and visitors alike will find beneficial.

Such action would be a significant win towards building space in the core of the innovation district for community-building activities.

LQC placemaking actions

Any major change will be costly. While the City of Rutland is securing funding, it could

build on its previous incremental tests with road paint and signage that fosters a pace more conducive to lingering.

A Light Quick Cheap method wouldn't be half as elegant as the dream, but painting out the future changes, as was recently done with a crosswalk on Merchants Row nearby, could get the community excited about future changes while showing granting bodies that Rutland is committed to this change.

Slow Street Option

One option that wasn't presented in the Cen-

ter Street scoping study that could meet the needs of a variety of users is a “slow street”. On a slow street, there are usually two travel lanes that are a little wider than the standard vehicle, so that vehicles drivers naturally slow down as they approach an oncoming vehicle, to ensure that passing can be done safely.

A design like this would allow two way traffic to continue, but the slower speeds would make the road calmer, as drivers who don’t have errands on Center Street would naturally choose faster routes. Pocket parks, bike racks, and other small scale infrastructure can further foster people-friendly speeds.

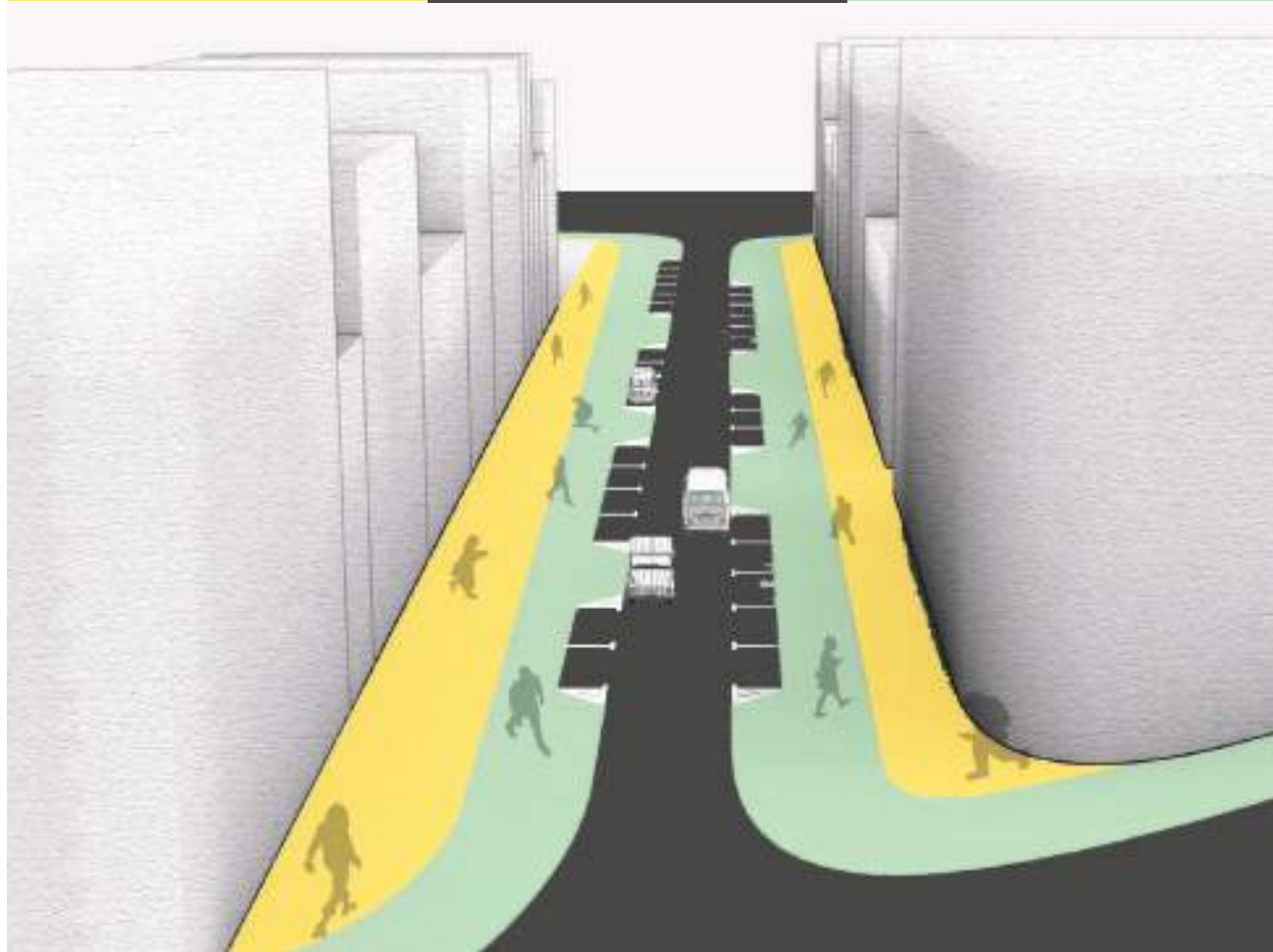
Future opportunities

For the dream to be fully realized, the findings of a December 2023 utility study will need to be addressed. Replacing aging water and waste/stormwater infrastructure will cost nearly \$4 million. Following that, the design, project management, construction, and inspection of a major street overhaul like this would likely cost close to another \$4 million.

The city has already reserved \$500,000 of its American Rescue Act (ARPA) funds as a “placeholder” for the project. Additionally, a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district could be created to make it easier to finance the project (more information on p. 49).

However, securing additional grant funding will be critical for a project of this size to be completed in Rutland.

<p>Commercial space 13,400 sq ft 890% increase</p>	<p>Parking space 30 spaces No change</p>	<p>Pedestrian space 18,000 sq ft 71% increase</p>
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The slow street option would decrease travel lane width, slowing all road users while preventing a loss in use type.

“Improving Center Street will create a better experience for those who come to explore the area, and will also help local businesses thrive and grow. It’s a win-win situation for everyone involved!”

- Tiffany Saltis, Executive Director of the Downtown Rutland Partnership

Placemaking actions

EMC crosswalk adjustment

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Mid-Term

Background

Evelyn Street, Merchant's Row, and Strongs Avenue (EMS Ave) splits the innovation district in two, which creates a wide array of challenges for anyone not in a car. Since walkability is a key feature of thriving downtowns, major impediments to a place's walkability threaten its future vitality.

To be a walkable place, it is key that the area is compliant, safe, and dignified or interesting. In most places on EMS Ave there are three driving lanes, which should result in a street crossing distances of approximately 30 feet.

This is the case at the intersection of Strongs Avenue and Wales Street, where the street has been narrowed and the sidewalk extended into the parking lanes, creating better sight-lines for all use types.

However, in the heart of downtown at the Evelyn Street-Merchants Row-Center Street (EMC) intersection, the crosswalks are about double the minimum length, at 55-75 feet.

Convenience and safety for all

The presence of slip lanes, pedestrian push buttons, and non-concurrent signaling facilitates a walking experience that is unsafe,



Key partners: RRA, City of Rutland, DRP, Planning & Zoning, DPW, Parks & Recreation

unequal, and inefficient.

Millions of dollars are spent across the state every year on transportation projects that reduce the likelihood of such experiences for car drivers, often without other modes of transportation in mind.

Yet prioritizing pedestrians actually benefits car drivers: when someone walks across the street to buy groceries or a sandwich, they're taking up 10% of the street space that a car would. When fewer trips are taken by car, congestion is reduced, which makes necessary car trips through downtown more convenient.

This has the added benefit, too, of making streets more lively with people.

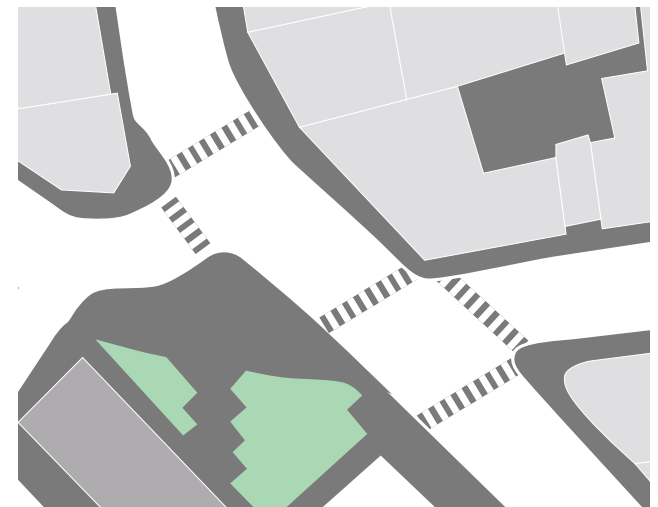
Scoping studies and direct action

Just like Center Street, the EMC intersection would benefit from a scoping study that could fully explore the challenges and opportunities that would allow the intersection and even the rest of EMS Ave to be safer and more convenient for all road users.

Until then, anyone can explore what a street that safely accommodates more uses using the Streetmix tool on p. 39.



Someone crossing the street at its narrowest point.. ©CORI



Example of a potential street realignment at EMC.



A direct action using paint and plastic bollards, facilitated by Brian Budrow, DRP, RRPC, and DPW ©CORI

Yet, scoping studies aren't necessary to start exploring how street changes might affect comfort and safety levels.

Direct actions in conjunction with the city and supported by local planning organizations have proven to be effective ways to test changes on local roads.

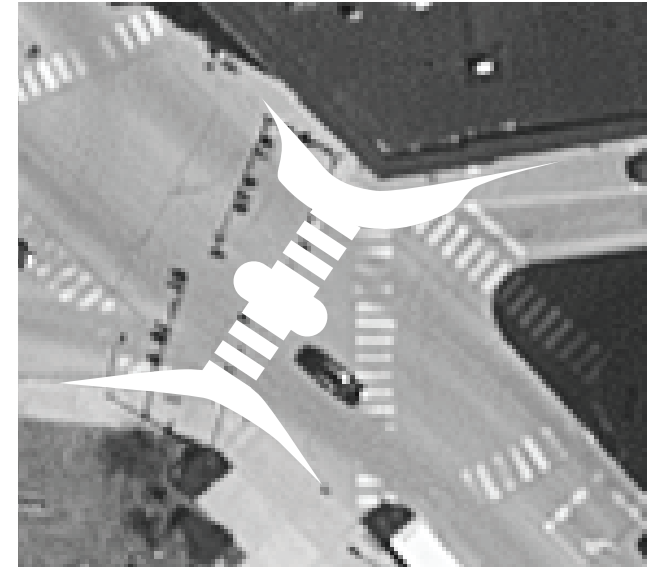
In fact, timing such actions ahead of the one lane one-way redevelopment of Center Street would give the design of the southwest end of that street an opportunity to support future changes, instead of needing to be reassessed and dug up again in a few years.

LQC placemaking actions

While nearly every crossing at EMC would benefit from change, it may be helpful to begin with the one that would be used by the most people.

The following approach will help you to determine which one that is.

1. Observe and record the way people use this intersection. Do pedestrians cross here, even without a signal, or outside of the crosswalks? Do car drivers hug the edges or stay towards the middle?
2. Draw your findings on the map provided in the appendix.
3. Draw where you think the crosswalk should be painted, where "curb extensions" should be painted, and where plastic bollards could be placed.
4. Share your ideas with other crosswalk users to get their ideas and feedback.
5. Estimate how much materials and time will be needed to make this change.
6. Share your idea with the Downtown



An example of where a new crosswalk could be painted.

Rutland Partnership, the Rutland Redevelopment Authority, and the City of Rutland. The City will ultimately need to evaluate and sign off on this idea before any changes can occur.

7. Raise the money to purchase paint and bollards. Check out the grants page in the appendix, or if the cost is low, see if your neighbors and downtown businesses are interested in chipping in.

8. At a time chosen by the city when traffic can be redirected and the site closed, work with DPW to paint the changes onto the roadway. Add the bollards when the paint is dry.

9. Observe and record the way people use the intersection now. Has the safety and efficiency of the intersection improved for many users?

Placemaking tools

Re-imagining streets

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ShortTerm

Background

Rutland is already very familiar with re-imagining streets as places for more than just steady car travel, with short term, and long term tests taking place on Center Street, Merchant’s Row, and others in the city.

Adjusting local street infrastructure takes leadership buy-in and careful consideration to implement, and unlike murals or placemaking actions on private property in public view, it often feels inaccessible to a community.

Yet streets are places that the people who use them most have meaningful insights into, and shouldn’t be off the list of places where the public can put forth ideas — even if im-

Key partners: *RRPC, DPW, Planning & Zoning, DRP, RRA*

plementation could ultimately be expensive and require traffic studies. After all, speeding is dangerous, and slower travel speeds have actually been shown to be *good* for business¹¹.

As mentioned on the previous page, the Downtown Rutland Partnership teaming up with the Rutland Regional Planning Commission and the City of Rutland to pilot painted curb extensions at the mid-block crossing on Merchants Row, to make it safer for pedestrians to cross, is a great example of how collaborative tests can be done.

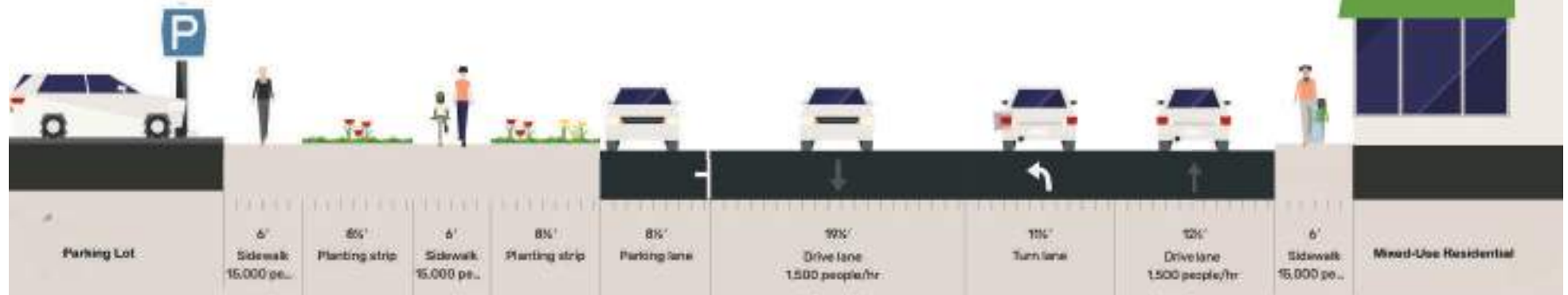
Their proposal included simple graphics that illustrated what the changes would look like, to make it easier for the Board of Aldermen

to consider them.

And while knowing one’s way around a graphic design program like Inkscape or Adobe Illustrator is always helpful, there’s a tool on the internet that simplifies the science of street design.

Streetmix

Streetmix.net is an easy way to imagine changes to a street you’re familiar with, and see if the changes you’re imagining would allow it to host the same number of users, or



The widest section of Merchants Row, plus the Rutland Shopping Plaza, shown as currently designed.

perhaps even more, with small changes. In this tool, you can add and subtract features to a street as well as change their widths.

If you've made a feature too narrow, it will turn red to tell you that it can't support the function or capacity properly. You can save, share, or login to keep track of your ideas as well.

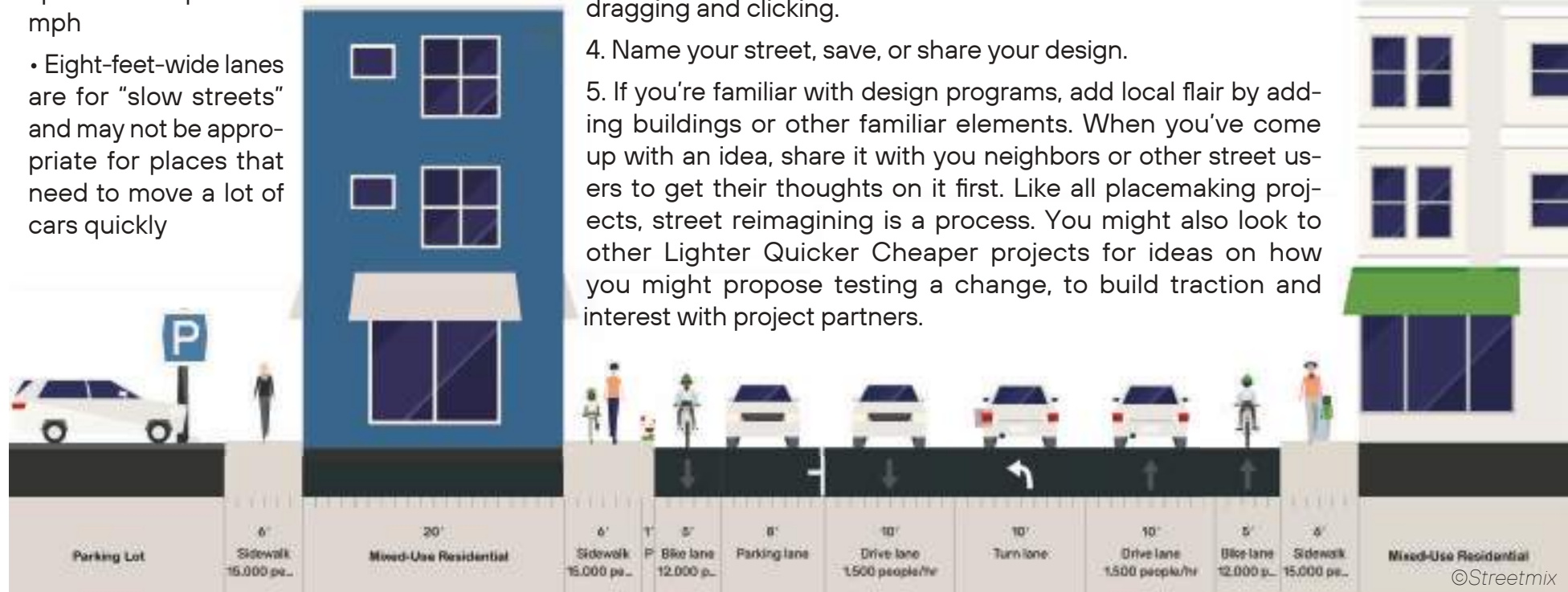
Street engineering notes

Some added notes may be helpful to keep in mind when re-imagining streets:

- Twelve-foot-wide lanes can support maximum speeds of up to 70mph
- Ten-foot-wide lanes can support maximum speeds of up to 45 mph
- Eight-foot-wide lanes are for "slow streets" and may not be appropriate for places that need to move a lot of cars quickly

How to use Streetmix.net

1. Measure the width of the street (including each lane) that you want to reimagine. If you don't have a tape measure and a helper, you can use Google Maps. When using Google Maps in satellite view, right click on one edge of the street to open a menu, and click "measure." Then left click on the opposite side of the street, and the distance between the two points will appear.
2. In Street Mix, change the default street width near the top of the page to the width of your street (including adjusting the units to be in Imperial).
3. Add, subtract, and adjust street elements by dragging and clicking.
4. Name your street, save, or share your design.
5. If you're familiar with design programs, add local flair by adding buildings or other familiar elements. When you've come up with an idea, share it with you neighbors or other street users to get their thoughts on it first. Like all placemaking projects, street reimaging is a process. You might also look to other Lighter Quicker Cheaper projects for ideas on how you might propose testing a change, to build traction and interest with project partners.



The widest section of Merchants Row, plus the Rutland Shopping Plaza, reimagined with bike lanes and added buildings.

Plan suggestion

Shopping Plaza repair

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Long-Term



Key partners: *RRA, Planning & Zoning Department, DPW, DRP*

Background

The ground where the Rutland Shopping Plaza sits has repeatedly been on the cutting edge of land use.

It was originally cleared as a train yard in the 1850s, and the mixed use buildings of Merchants Row and Center Street were built to serve it.

In the 1960s, a “cluster layout” of retail stores with parking – the geography of the now-common shopping plaza – took the place of the train yard when the railroad business fell on hard times.

Even the Walmart that acts at the plaza’s centerpiece was heralded as a shining example of “smart growth” in a 2001 book by the Natural Resources Defense Council about “Solving Sprawl.”¹²

Today, some of these once-celebrated types of uses are being recognized nationally as costly mistakes.

Yet this doesn’t need to be how the Rutland Shopping Plaza soldiers on. It could instead continue its long pattern of responding nimbly to meet the needs of the moment, utilizing

the best practices of land use policy today: one’s that don’t try in vain to solve sprawl, but instead to repair it.

Understanding sprawl

Sprawl is a land use pattern that separates residential, commercial, and public uses from each other, with no regard for the distances between places.

Daily needs can only be met by car, route options are sparse when compared to grid networks, and their true costs are postponed.

While most of Rutland’s “sprawl” can be found along Rt. 7, even the comparatively smaller Rutland Shopping Plaza fosters the kinds of social and physical damage that studies have shown comes from sprawl.

In contrast, so-called “complete” communities are economically robust because they include a variety of businesses that support daily needs, and nearby residents work at and patronize those businesses.

They are socially healthy because many generations with diverse incomes and backgrounds live and interact within them.

Repairing sprawl involves urban design, reg-

ulatory, and implementation techniques.

The final products of sprawl repair are communities in which people live better, drive less, and, as a result, save energy and re-

Land use in the Downtown Business District

City of Rutland Master Plan 2020

“The purpose of the Downtown Business District is to promote a compact, pedestrian-oriented town center that serves as the business, commercial, service, and governmental hub of the county. Mixed-use buildings that include high density residential uses on upper floors are encouraged.

“Furthermore, it is the intent of this district to foster a unique, attractive, and memorable destination for residents and visitors by protecting historically and culturally significant resources and promoting high quality urban design.”

sources, ultimately contributing to a healthier environment.

Future opportunities

Within the Innovation District in Rutland, the Rutland Shopping plaza represents a key opportunity for growth.

Its 22 acres are owned by just three groups, including the City. Coordination between them could create conditions that move the plaza toward the land use priorities outlined for the Downtown Business District in the 2020 Master Plan — in which the plaza is located, but doesn't currently resemble.

The site sketch below is shared for the purpose of imagining what a cohesive Downtown Business District could look like, with the

understanding that such would be extremely difficult to achieve.

However, we recommend that city leaders consider what current and future needs sprawl repair might address, and if a plan could set a course towards doubling the available mixed-use residential space downtown.

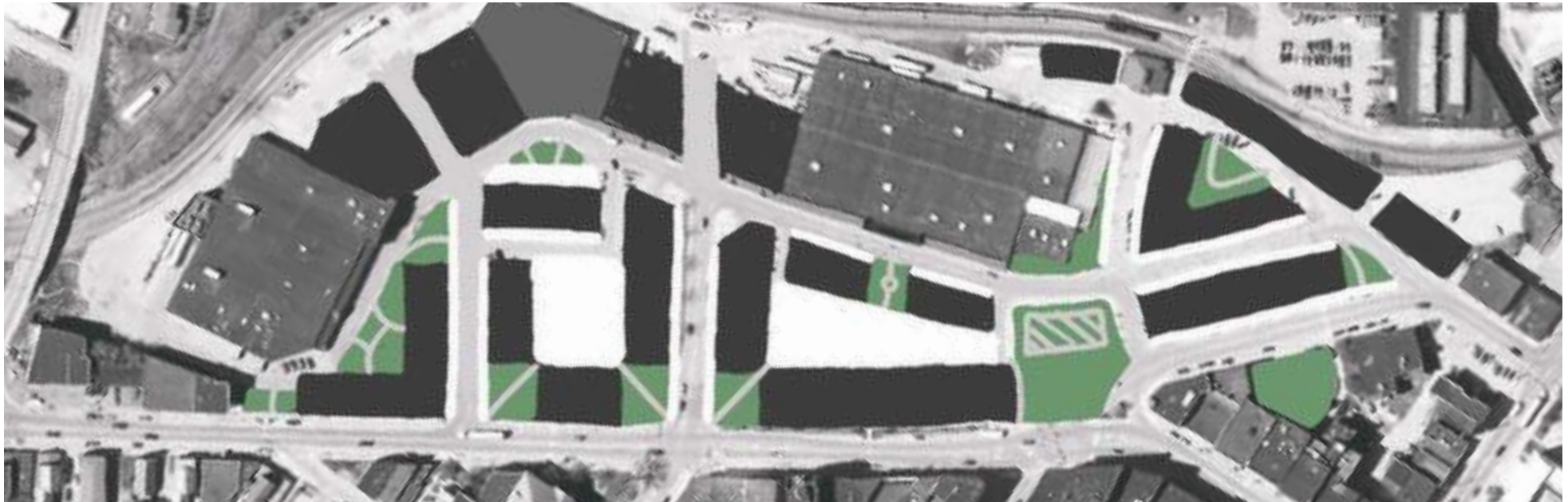
In the meantime, ample opportunity exists to begin adjusting this space in comparatively smaller but meaningful ways. Developers who aim to build mixed-use buildings could be solicited for "liner" sites like the Evelyn Street Lot or infill within the parking lot such as "Pad A" from Brixmor's website.

Additionally, the City of Rutland recently landed a \$1 million USDA Urban Forestry grant. They plan to use it on a variety of disadvan-

tagged areas and city-owned spaces, including near the plaza, to increase canopy-cover and mitigate stormwater issues. More trees, especially around the plaza, would foster a better sidewalk experience — one that moves away from the characteristics of sprawl.



Proposed "Pad A" site in the Plaza. ©Brixmor



The Rutland Shopping Plaza reimagined as a complete community.

Plan suggestion

Housing action plan

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Mid-Term

Overview

The cost of housing in the City of Rutland is a major challenge for residents across much of the income spectrum.

In particular, those who make enough money that they are not eligible for subsidized housing struggle to compete in an unhealthy housing market where demand has outstripped available supply.

For example, the Rutland Region Housing Needs Assessment from August 2023 notes that about 2,638 of the 7,536 households in Rutland City were spending more than the 30% of their income on housing expenses (the “rule-of-thumb” in rent-budgeting), and almost half of those were spending more than 50%.

With an average rent of \$1,500 per month, if all of the especially cost-burdened household living in Rutland City were able to spend that additional 20% of their income on necessities locally instead of on housing costs, it would add more than \$7 million to the local economy every year.

What is happening now

On June 5, 2023, the Housing Opportunities

Rutland Innovation District Placemaking Plan



Key partners: Housing Trust of R.C., Habitat for Humanity of R.C., Planning & Zoning, RRA, RRPC, Neighborworks of Western VT



Juneberry Lane; Photo © Nina Keck, VPR

Made for Everyone (HOME) Act (S.100) was signed into law by VT Governor Scott.

The law amended Act 250 and others to enable new opportunities for housing development, creating expansions for affordable housing programs, lowering barriers to smart growth with Act 250 exemptions for building affordable housing in designated Neighborhood Development Areas (NDA's), and updating the baseline municipal code so that barriers like parking minimums don't get in the way of adding Accessory Dwelling Units.

Additionally, HomeShare Vermont continues to expand its reach, and this year is testing out its services in two Rutland County towns. One of the housing challenges in Rutland is that the average family size doesn't match the average house size.

Homeshare programs that match an older resident with a younger one who can help to care for the property in exchange for a break on rent could alleviate some of this housing size mismatch. With additional funding the program could expand to the City of Rutland in the near future.

Bylaw updates and missing middle housing

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) can help towns to modernize their bylaws to rebuild this "Missing Middle" housing, using municipal planning grants. "Missing Middle" is a housing term that describes a range of house-scale



A potential reuse location, in the NDA @Google

residential building types that have multiple units that are compatible in scale and form with detached single-family homes.

A great example of "Missing Middle" housing in Rutland is the Juneberry Lane and Hickory Street apartments. The Rutland Housing Authority built a mix of charming multi-family houses, which replaced a development of nondescript brick buildings.

In addition to being more accessible by literally moving a road, the building complex hosts a mix of market rate and affordable housing units. The \$22 million needed to make this project happen came from a variety of sources that took years to put together, with most of the funding coming from a Community Block Development Grant (CBDG).

Across the country, zoning, while well-intentioned, has made it illegal to build many of the most charming, walkable, dense downtown places that many people enjoy.

For example, some lots with buildings in

downtown Rutland are under 5,000 square feet and some have less than 20 feet of road frontage. Yet these lot sizes and the buildings on them would be impossible to recreate today based on current zoning regulations.

Prior to zoning regulations, all cities were built incrementally and new buildings filled in the gaps between others. They evolved as people gained wealth or had the time to add on, making building relatively affordable.

Zoning rules have made development safer, but have also added friction to our collective ability to add on and fill in. Much like a startup, if a place can't pivot in the face of challenges, it stagnates and could decay.

Rutland has been considering an update to its 2008 zoning regulations since 2021. Many of the suggested changes would alleviate some frictions to adding housing, though "Missing Middle"-specific and "form-based" considerations go even further.

Next steps

As suggested by Mary Cohen, executive Director of the Housing Trust of Rutland County, a Housing Action Plan for Rutland City would support continued growth in the housing market, preserve aging houses and apartments, illustrate pathways to revitalizing downtown mixed use residential units, and increase production of missing middle units.

With many new options due to the HOME Act, such a plan could quickly outline the best path forward.

Other actions

Making room on your block

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Mid-Term

Background

Housing is a big challenge, but nonprofits, real estate developers, or people with \$250,000-plus in the bank aren't the only ones who can reactivate or build spaces to improve access to housing in their neighborhood.

Whether it's for themselves, their children, their friends, or for some rental income, a significant long-term difference can be made one space at a time — as was the way of the world before single family housing developments became a dominant development pattern.

A Rutland property on the foreclosure market is a great example of a space that two people with moderate savings could update to making more space in their neighborhood.

Advocating for missing middle to your neighbors and city

Missing middle housing in Rutland would best fit into the downtown business and mixed residential districts as replacements, renovations, or additions to existing properties.

In talking with neighbors, ideas like "density," "up-zoning," or "multifamily" can bring up



Key partners: *Planning & Zoning, Rutland Housing Trust, Private Developers, Various Contractors*

visions of tall, nondescript apartment blocks, so it can be helpful to instead use terms that focus on specific forms, like "duplex," "courtyard apartment," or "townhouse." It can also be helpful for housing developers to keep neighbors in the know about potential changes to their neighborhood, so that concerns can be alleviated early.

Missing middle housing won't change the character of your neighborhood, but it will make it easier for teachers, firefighters, and small business owners to call Rutland home.

Practical advice

Building or rehabbing structures in your neighborhood is achievable, but unless you're starting with a significant amount of money, it will likely be one of the bigger projects you take on in your lifetime (see the "future opportunities" section for several potential resources).

This rewarding-yet-testing experience could take anywhere from one year to five years to complete. Additionally, just like having a co-founder in a start-up business, working on the house with a family member or friend can keep momentum high — especially if each person has their own part of the home



Photo and listing © foreclosurelistings.com

Foreclosure on 69 Plain St.

This 1752 sq ft, 4-bed, 2-bath single-family house presents a valuable investment opportunity in Rutland. For \$39,000, move in effortlessly and relish the home as-is, located in one of Rutland's most sought-after neighborhoods.

The spacious 12,533 square foot corner lot comes with a garage, trees, and fits in among a mix of nearby single and multi-family residences near downtown.



A style at home on Plain St

In this MR-1 (Mixed Residential 1) District, there are a number of existing multi-family building, such as side-by-side duplexes and stacked duplexes, that fit into the character of the neighborhood. ©Google

to be responsible for.

Co-ownership can also make investing less burdensome, whether that means having the 20% for a down payment between you, or one person qualifying for a first-time home ownership interest rate.

While major construction and utility-related work like rewiring should often be left to the professionals, many other tasks such as non-structural framing, floor finishing, and drywalling can be taken on by individuals who are willing to learn and able to realize mistakes quickly.

Volunteering with Habitat for Humanity or assisting other people with building projects can build skills and confidence, too.

Basic steps for building or renovating

- Check the zoning requirements of the property in question. Understand your financing options, including potential construction loans.
- Purchase the property or building.
- Create construction/renovation plans (follow the rules in the building code).
- Submit plans to city for approval. Make corrections as needed.
- Obtain a building permit.
- Begin demolition or site preparation. Construct or frame walls and roof. Install utilities. Add walls, flooring, and trim. Paint, install cabinets and appliances, and bring in furniture.

Future opportunities

New as of spring 2024, the VT “Homes for All” toolkit provides comprehensive resources and guidance that puts the tools of home-building back in the hands of individuals. The “Design & Do” toolkit will provide a Missing Middle Design guide, Vermont Neighborhood Infill Design Case Studies, a “Builder’s Workbook”, and training resources.

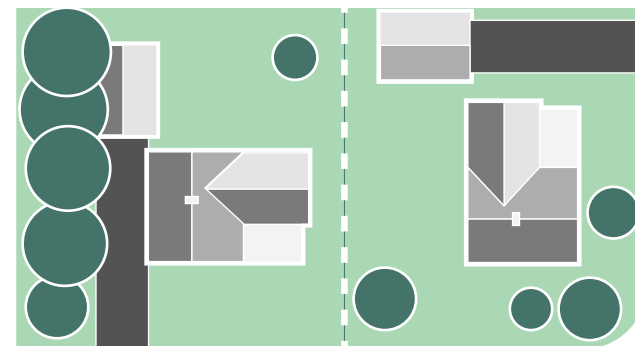
Additionally, the HUD Home Investment Partnerships Program provides funding in partnership with local nonprofits to facilitate building, buying, and rehabbing. By leveraging these resources, individuals can create “gentle infill” and be part of the solution that increases housing affordability in Rutland.



A room in need of TLC, © foreclosurelistings.com



The current property line of the single family parcel.



The parcel could be split into two multi-family parcels.

Other actions

Deter Lacking Land Use

\$\$ **Mid-Term**

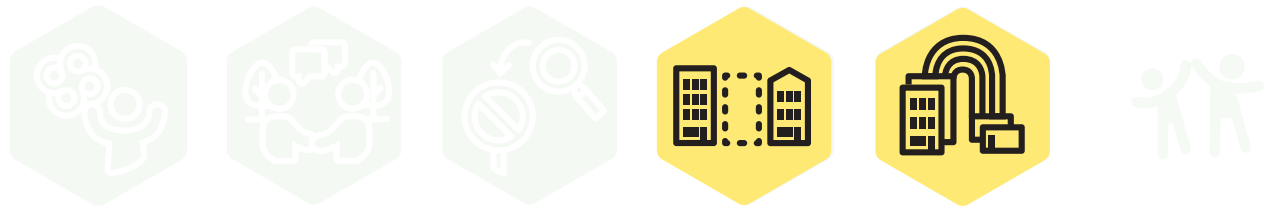
Taxable Value Per Acre Basics

Like most cities, Rutland’s property values (what a buyer might pay on the open market) are higher in downtown than elsewhere in the city. High property values often result in higher taxes that a property owner pays to their municipality. The map at right illustrates the taxable value per acre of downtown properties, with lower property values in light green and higher property values in dark green.

There are a number of light green parcels within the yellow boundary of the Downtown Business District. Many of these are parking lots, vacant buildings, or single family homes: uses that don’t match the priorities laid out for this district in the Rutland 2020 Master Plan.

Parking Space

In downtown Rutland, land being used for parking is taxed at around \$0.28 per square foot, while many buildings are charged \$1.43 per square foot. This method of valuation penalizes improvement and can contribute to urban fringe sprawl. If the downtown land currently used for surface level parking were taxed at the same rate as productive



Key partners: *City of Rutland, Downtown Building Owners*

Taxable Value Per Acre Map



Source: Vermont Center for Geographic Information, City of Rutland Tax Rate Fiscal Year 2024

19.4% of Rutland's downtown is dedicated to parking, while 1.6% is dedicated to parks.

Area estimates using OpenStreetMap polygons



Source: OpenStreetMap contributors & map data ©Google

“ The twin gods of Smooth Traffic and Ample Parking—have turned our downtowns into places that are easy to get to but not worth arriving at.”

-Jeff Speck

buildings, Rutland City would see just under \$13,000 in additional revenue — more than the yearly cost of the City Band.

Having space to park cars is important, and in places where all parking spots are regularly used, elimination of parking without investing in alternatives could be detrimental to nearby businesses. However, it's important to consider that too much available parking may increase traffic congestion, encourage sprawl, increase housing costs, degrade urban design, prevent walkability, and ultimately damage the economy.

With the Parking Garage being underutilized, Rutland is likely a place where parking is always available — even if it's minorly inconvenient to those accustomed to parking right in front of where they want to go. Thus, incentivising the development of places for people over places for vehicle storage would likely increase people's use of downtown while increasing property tax revenue.

A note on parks

The need for more space for people to socialize, and information on how such spaces positively impact anything from innovation to resilience, is covered throughout this plan. Though it wouldn't increase taxable value, replacing two parking lots with parks could double the amount of park space in downtown, creating many more reasons to visit and stay.

Encouraging productive land use

There are many ways to incentivize the development of productive places, one of which is a land value tax. When paired with a decrease in the tax applied to buildings, they make it less costly to own and maintain buildings and more costly for people to hold on to vacant or underutilized properties.

Thay Bishop, Sr. Program Advisor at the Federal Highway Administration, explains: “Taxes on building values reduce the quantity and quality of buildings while increasing their prices. Surprisingly, taxes on land values typically lead to lower land prices and motivate development of high-value sites near existing urban infrastructure amenities, reducing sprawl and infrastructure duplication.”¹³

There would be minimal risk to the city's tax revenues if building taxes were lowered and land taxes increased. In fact, such a change is likely to be revenue-positive over time as parking lots, vacant buildings, and vacant land become places where less crime occurs, more people work and live, and infrastructure is used more efficiently.

The City of Rutland, which is already empowered to set property tax rates, should be able to set building value and land value tax rates at different amounts. In many places where such changes are implemented, they are phased in gradually over a period of years.

Note: This solution may not work in places where a TIF district is also pursued. (see p.49)

Other actions

Mixed use living

\$\$\$

Mid-Term

Background

At present, there are approximately 300 downtown dwelling units (shown in green on the map). If underutilized upper floors were remodeled for living (shown in yellow), at least 300 additional people could live there.

With 87% of people willing to travel no more than 15 minutes for routine purchases¹⁴, more people downtown means more people who will walk one street over to grab a bite to eat or see a performance at the Paramount. In fact, their presence would be enough to support two new restaurants in downtown.

With 41% of employees working remotely to some degree¹⁵, and a quarter of those working from coworking spaces¹⁶, doubling downtown living options would add about 32 Hub CoWorking space members.

Next Steps

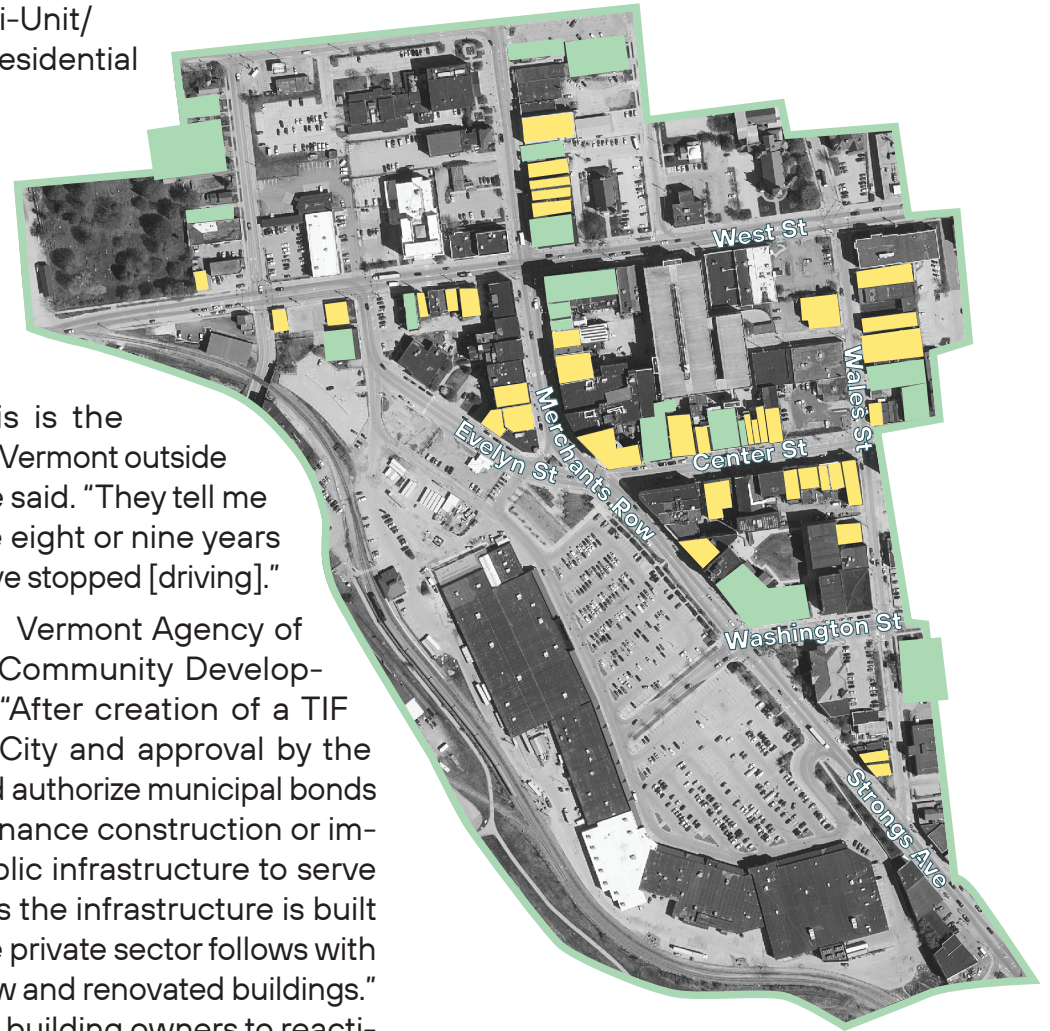
One option that Rutland can consider to incentivise the redevelopment of upstairs housing is to create a Tax Increment Financing (TIF)¹⁷ district. The City of Rutland has been considering this over the past several years, inspired by the success of Saint Albans City, who instigated a TIF district in 2012. A

Key partners: *Planning & Zoning, Rutland Housing Trust, RRA, Downtown Building Owners*

- Existing Multi-Unit/
Mixed-Use Residential
- Potential
Mixed-Use
Residential

newer business owner there told the Saint Albans Messenger, "This is the best downtown in Vermont outside of a major city," he said. "They tell me that if I had come eight or nine years ago, I wouldn't have stopped [driving]."

According to the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development's website, "After creation of a TIF District by a the City and approval by the state, voters would authorize municipal bonds or other debt to finance construction or improvement of public infrastructure to serve the TIF District. As the infrastructure is built and improved, the private sector follows with investments in new and renovated buildings." It is risky for many building owners to reactivate upstairs living spaces; TIF districts can reduce that risk for everyone's benefit.



Downtown Business District, with current and potential mixed-use residential building highlighted

Now What?

There are many ideas and potential paths forward outlined in this plan- too many for any one administration, planning organization, or highly motivated civic group with too many things on their plate to tackle.

You may feel somewhat overwhelmed, but hopefully you also feel informed about your own community in new ways, inspired about future possibilities, and excited to ask more questions to the experts of various spaces.

Big changes- for momentum builders

Quite a few of these projects have already been tested or are in the works. To have the best chance of making serious progress on big projects, it can be helpful to join projects that already have buy-in from civic groups and the Board of Aldermen alike.

The following ideas have the greatest opportunity for making large changes fast:

- Depot park p. 30
- Center St. for community p. 35
- Mixed use living p. 49

Medium experiments- for the inspired

If a given placemaking action has lit a fire under you, the best place to start is there. Talk to the “Key Partners” listed on that page about the idea, go back to p. 17 and walk

through the “Placemaking Best Practices”, to ensure that the suggested course of action is still accurate.

Practicing placemaking can seem daunting at first, because, like a science experiment, there’s always the chance that it won’t go as expected. Thus, if you’re able to overcome some initial hesitancy with a can-do attitude, the following experiments would tell you a lot about how to make a meaningful difference for a lot of people.

- Reimagining streets p. 22
- Indoor public space p. 24
- Transit hub signage p. 39

Small wins- for the already too busy

In a world where ribbon cuttings on million dollar projects are often the dream, it can be challenging to choose purposefully small actions. For those juggling full-time jobs and families though, that might be the best way to make a difference in your community right now.

Remember that even walking around town, picking up a piece of trash, or talking to someone new contributes to a higher quality place. The following actions could be a good place to find inspiration for quick, everyday actions:

- Take it outside p. 19
- Facade activation p. 20
- Meet up at the hub p. 25



EMS Ave, facing Southeast © Stephanie P. Romeo.



The Transit hub with many signs and few seats. ©CORI

Grants and other resources guide

Name	Details	Website	Applicable Projects
AARP Community Challenge	This grant provides \$500-\$50,000 to fund quick-action projects that can help communities become more livable for people of all ages, though some opportunities are age-specific.	aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge	Any from Objectives 2. (public spaces), 4 (housing), or 5 (plaza to core connections).
Animating Infrastructure Grant	This supports community projects that integrate art with infrastructure improvements. Through this program, the Council strives to demonstrate the positive impact of art in helping communities to meet goals of livability, walkability, safety, economic vitality, and community vibrancy	vermontartscouncil.org/grants/find-a-grant/organizations/animating-infrastructure	Free art wall p. 32
"Better Places" VT Toolkit	It is a resource for anyone interested in working together to create vibrant public places in the heart of Vermont communities.	outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/CD/CPR/Better-Places/CPR-Better-Places-Toolkit.pdf	Any project.
"Better Places" VT Patronicity	A "crowd granting" program empowering Vermonters to create inclusive and vibrant public places	patronicity.com/BetterPlacesVT	Any with a "Short Term" marker
Dept. of Transportation Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program	This grant provides technical assistance and grant funding to improve walkability, safety, and affordable transportation access through context-sensitive strategies for improving community connectivity. A 20% local match is needed for communities that don't qualify as "underserved".	transportation.gov/grants/rcnprogram/about-neighborhood-access-and-equity-grant-program	Transit center spaces p. 23; Center St. for community p.35; EMC crosswalk adjustment p. 37; Reimagining Streets p. 39

Dept. of Transportation Safe Street and Roads for All Grant Program	The program supports the development of a comprehensive safety action plan that identifies the most significant roadway safety concerns in a community and the implementation of projects and strategies to address roadway safety issues.	transportation.gov/grants/SS4A	EMC crosswalk adjustment p. 37; Reimagining Streets p. 39
Designated Downtown and Village Centers-Funding Directory	A funding directory for designated downtowns and village centers with resources for historic buildings, buildings and infrastructure, transportation and housing, recreation and conservation, Economic Development, Planning, and Efficiency, Planning and Financing, and Planning, Placemaking, and Capacity Building.	outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/CD/CPR/State-Designation-Programs/CPR-Funding-Directory.pdf	Any project.
Downtown Transportation Fund	A financing tool which assists municipalities in paying for transportation-related capital improvements within or serving a Designated Downtown and eligible Designated Village Centers	accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/downtown-transportation-fund	Center St. for community p. 35
Healthy Communities Vermont Toolbox	A toolbox with links to resources such as the "Small Towns, Healthy Places Podcast", community engagement best practices, and Health Equity Community design.	healthycommunitiesvt.com/resources	Many from Objective 2 (community connections)
Homes for All: A "Design & Do" toolkit	A toolkit to help individuals build and rehab homes, with a focus on "Missing Middle" and gentle infill.	accd.vermont.gov/homesforall	Making room on your block p. 45
HUD Home Investment Partnerships Program	This provides funding in partnership with local nonprofits for building, buying, and/or rehabilitating affordable housing for rent or homeownership or providing direct rental assistance to low-income people.	hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/home	Making room on your block p. 45

Grants and other resources guide

Name	Details	Website	Applicable Projects
NAR Placemaking Grants	The National Association of Realtors grants up to \$7,500 for temporary projects that create new, outdoor public spaces in a community on unused or underused sites. A member of a REALTOR® association must be involved.	realtorparty.realtor/ community-outreach/ placemaking	Any project that has “LQC Placemaking Actions” as a sub-heading
Nation Endowment for the Arts: Our Town	The program supports activities that integrate arts, culture, and design into local efforts that strengthen communities over the long term. They require a partnership component, and grants range from \$25,000 to \$150,000; match needed.	arts.gov/grants/ our-town	Most “Short Term” and “Medium Term” projects
Northern Border Regional Commission Catalyst Program	This program can assist with funding for establishing workforce development programs and facilities, growing outdoor recreation infrastructure and economies, and constructing new childcare and healthcare facilities	nbrc.gov/content/ Catalyst	Any projects related to the Hub, parks or outdoor areas, and “Co-work, Co-play” Space p. 27
Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity Program	This funds capital investments in surface transportation that will have a significant impact, especially in areas of persistent poverty or historically underserved communities. There’s no minimum for planning, and \$1 million - \$25 million for construction.	transportation.gov/ RAISEgrants	Center St. for community p.35; EMC crosswalk adjustment p. 37; Shopping plaza repair p. 41
Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant Program	This provides grants for projects to restore community connectivity by removing, retrofitting, or mitigating highways or other transportation facilities that create barriers to community connectivity, including to mobility, access, or economic development.	transportation.gov/ grants/rcnprogram/ about-rcp	Many from Objective 5 (plaza to core connections)

Recreation Economy for Rural Communities	This planning assistance program helps communities identify strategies to grow their outdoor recreation economy and revitalize their main streets.	epa.gov/smartgrowth/recreation-economy-rural-communities #Background	Any projects that involve parks or other outdoor areas.
Spark Connecting Community Grants	These grants put “building and nurturing community front and center”. They aim to support emerging grassroots projects with the potential to build social capital.	vermontcf.org/our-impact/programs-and-funds/spark-connecting-community	Meet up at the Hub p. 25
Thriving Communities Program	They funds organizations to provide technical assistance, planning, and capacity building support to disadvantaged and under-resourced communities, enabling them to advance transportation projects that support community-driven economic development, health, environment, mobility, and access goals.	transportation.gov/grants/thriving-communities	Center St. for community p.35; EMC crosswalk adjustment p. 37;
USDA Multi family housing programs	These assist rural property owners through loans, loan guarantees, and grants that enable owners to develop and rehabilitate properties for low-income, elderly, and disabled individuals and families as well as domestic farm laborers.	rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs/multi-family-housing-programs	Many from Objective 4 (housing)
USDA Single Family Housing Programs	These offer qualifying individuals and families the opportunity to purchase or build a new single family home with no money down, to repair their existing home, or to refinance their current mortgage under certain qualifying circumstances.	rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-programs	Many from Objective 4 (housing)

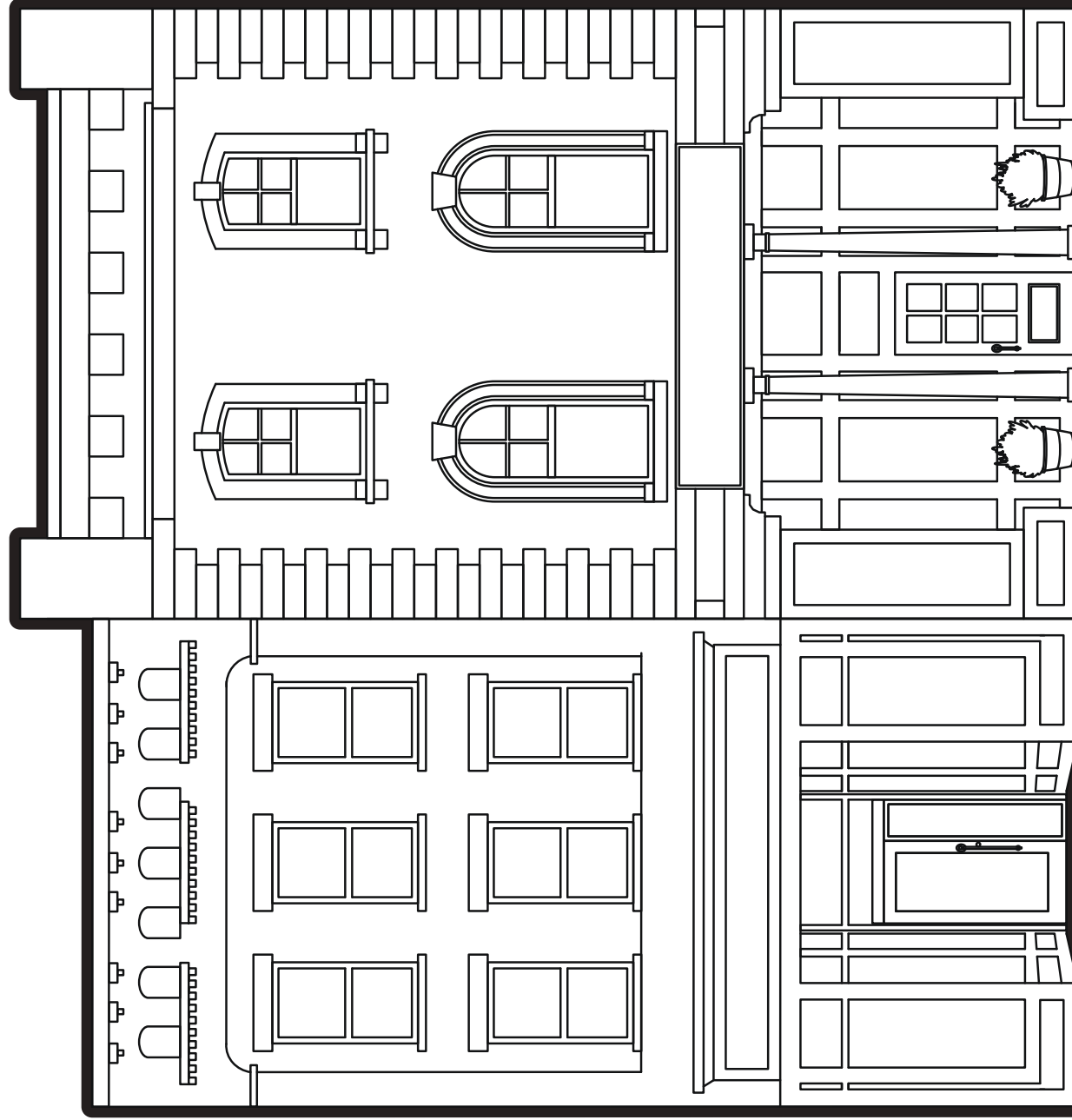
Vermont Arts Council	A council that is committed to building a Vermont where art, culture, and creativity are at the heart of its communities. Their grants range from \$1,000 to \$15,000, no match required, and must engage an artist.	vermontartscouncil.org	Evelyn St lot p. 29 Free art wall, p. 32
Vermont Brownfields Revitalization Fund	These awards will foster economic development by supporting the redevelopment of contaminated properties; no maximum.	accd.vermont.gov/economic-development/	Evelyn street lot p. 29
Vermont Community Development Program Implementation Grant	These \$50,000-\$1,000,000 grants can assist businesses to create or retain jobs, create or rehabilitate housing units.	accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/vcdp	"Co-work, Co-play" Space p. 27; any from Objective 4 (housing)
Vermont Design Toolkit	A design toolkit for designated downtowns.	outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/CD/CPR/Resources-and-Rules/CPR-Planning-Design-Toolkit.pdf	Any project.
Vermont Downtown Transportation Fund	These finance transportation-related capital improvements in support of economic development, including alteration of roads and highways, parking/bus facilities, and pedestrian and streetscape improvement. Can cover up to 80% of project costs up to \$200,000, and location must be a Designated Downtown	accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/downtown-transportation-fund	Transit center spaces p. 23; Center St. for community p.35; EMC crosswalk adjustment p. 37; Reimagining Streets p. 39
Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP)	This offers grants up to \$50,000 per unit for repairs needed to bring vacant rental units up to Vermont Rental Housing Health Code guidelines, add new units to an existing building, or create an accessory dwelling unit on an owner-occupied property.	accd.vermont.gov/vhip	Many from Objective 4 (housing)

Vermont Municipal Planning Grant	These \$3,000-\$60,000 grants fund the development of plans that can help breathe new life into communities, plan for future growth and development, and improve the quality of life.	accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/municipal-planning-grant	Shopping Plaza repair p. 41; Housing action plan p. 43;
Vtrans Transportation Alternatives Program	These state grants are for infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation, among other things. Grants range from \$50,000 - \$300,000 and need a 20% local match	vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/local-projects/transport-alt	Transit center spaces p. 23; EMC crosswalk adjustment p. 32; Reimagining streets p. 39
VTrans Pedestrian and Bike Program	These state grants are for scoping, design, and construction of bike and pedestrian facilities. No min or max, but 20% or 50% local matches are required.	vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/local-projects/bike-ped	EMC crosswalk adjustment p. 32; Reimagining streets p. 39

EMC Intersection Worksheet

Directions: Draw in sidewalk bump-outs, crosswalks, and lanes that would make the intersection of Evelyn Street, Merchants Row, and Center Street safer for people who are walking or rolling.





Share your ideas for downtown!

What places would you want to create in downtown Rutland?

What would make it more welcoming?

The Center on Rural Innovation is collaborating with CEDRR on an innovation-focused placemaking plan with people in Rutland City. Placemaking is when people work together to design the places that are important to them, and innovation is when you create something that has never been seen before. Anyone can dream big for the town they call home.

Share your ideas on social media as #whatifrutland, drop off your ideas at the CEDRR Office at 67 Merchants Ave, or email them to lisa.glover@ruralinnovation.us

Examples of sign types beyond prohibitive signage

Proactive design opportunity:

There is an unmet need; fix through design.



Note: Having designated places to skate, sit, smoke, or use a bathroom can reduce these behaviors in other places.

Proactive signage:

Provide direction instead of saying 'no'.



Crying wolf doesn't help anyone:

Things that don't happen in that location rarely need signage.



Note: While real risks in some locations, falling rocks in urban areas and sharks in inland rivers are a rare phenomenon. If a 'no' is needed to keep people out, specify the actual danger.

No really, 'No' is necessary:

Use strong words and explain why: there is an unfixable hazard.





Rutland Innovation District Placemaking Plan

Endnotes

- 1 Rural Health Information Hub. <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/states/united-states>
- 2 Rate of homelessness in Vermont remains 2nd highest in U.S. in 2023 By Nate Lantieri and Leslie Black-Plumeau December 18, 2023, Vermont Housing Finance Agency. <https://www.vhfa.org/news/blog/rate-homelessness-vermont-remains-2nd-highest-us-2023>
- 3 Long waves in the geography of innovation: The rise and decline of regional clusters of creativity over time. By Malte Doehne and Katja Rost <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048733321000998>
- 4 Why Investing in Public Space Matters for Cities and Real Estate Developers. By J.T. Theeuwes. February 02, 2021 <https://www.gensler.com/blog/why-investing-in-public-space-matters-for-cities-and-real-estate-developers>
- 5 Is public space the new anchor tenant? By Clark Israili on 8/26/22, <https://warrington.ufl.edu/du-diligence/2022/08/26/is-public-space-the-new-anchor-tenant/>
- 6 How Parks Support Entrepreneurship. By Endeavor Insight · On July 16, 2015 <http://www.ecosysteminsights.org/the-link-between-parks-and-a-thriving-business-ecosystem/>
- 7 Five Numbers to remember about early childhood development. Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University <https://www.wildcatdistrict.k-state.edu/food-family/child-development/documents/5%20Numbers%20to%20Remember.pdf>
- 8 Entrepreneurship among parents. By Lars Kolvereid, 2018. <https://innovation-entrepreneurship.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s13731-018-0089-0#:~:text=Having%20children%20and%20the%20number,for%20both%20women%20and%20men.>
- 9 “Rutland community frustrated at the housing situation in city, town” MyNBC5 article by Carolyn Sistrand, June 16th, 2022 <https://www.mynbc5.com/article/rutland-community-frustrated-at-the-housing-situation-in-city-town/40305029#>
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- 11 Congestion can be good, study reports By Robert Steuteville June 6, 2018 on Congress for the New Urbanism <https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/2018/06/06/congestion-can-be-good-study-reports>
- 12 “The anti-sprawl Wal-Mart: Downtown Rutland store cited as example of smart growth” Rutland Herald, By Bruce Edwards, Jan 5, 2003 https://www.rutlandherald.com/news/the-anti-sprawl-wal-mart-downtown-rutland-store-cited-as-example-of-smart-growth/article_87d1992c-6224-51a7-9845-b8bd492d7899.html
- 13 Frequently Asked Questions- Land Value Tax. Thay N. Bishop in October, 2020. https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ipd/value_capture/defined/faq_land_value_tax.aspx

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- 15 Remote Work Statistics And Trends In 2024. Forbes Advisor, By Katherine Haan on June 12, 2023 <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/remote-work-statistics/#:~:text=As%20of%202023%2C%2012.7%25%20of,to%20a%20hybrid%20work%20model>
- 16 Coworking Space Usage Doubles, Though Consumers Still Prefer Working at Home. By Andrew Gallant on 11-6-2023. <https://civicscience.com/coworking-space-usage-doubles-though-consumers-still-prefer-working-at-home/>
- 17 Tax Increment Finance. By the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development. <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/tif>

Documents References

The following plans and policies informed the development of this Innovation District Placemaking Plan. This plan builds upon these plans and does not replace them.

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- Center Street Scoping Study. Published 8-29-2022 by DuBois & King, Inc.
- City of Rutland Land Development Regulations. Drafted 5-27-2021 by the City of Rutland.
- Reimagine Rutland: Downtown Rutland Strategic Plan. Published 5-2020 by Camoin Associates
- Gateway Plan: Downtown Rutland. Published 5-6-2015 by Landworks.
- Rutland City: Creative Communities Program Final Report and Action Plan. Published June 2006 by the Vermont Council on Rural Development
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Center
on Rural
Innovation